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KRSNA IN HISTORY AND LEGEND

BIMANBEHARI MAJUMDAR

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1969

To my esteemed friend

Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad

Vice-Chancellor,

Bhagalpur University

FOREWORD

With the third set of lectures delivered at the Centre by Dr. B. B. Majumdar, the series is closed for the present.

I am grateful to Dr. Majumdar and his son Dr. Bhakat Prasad who saw the first half of the book through the press and to Dr. D. R. Das, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre, who accepted the responsibility of correcting the proofs of its latter half and of revising the index. I am also thankful to the Pooran Press for their cooperation.

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March 1, 1969.

PREFACE

The recent trend in historical studies in Western countries is to lay emphasis on the evolution of ideas which motivate social and cultural movements rather than on mere narration of facts and events. The concepts of the life and teachings of Kṛṣṇa have probably exerted a more profound influence on the shaping of Indian art, literature, religion and philosophy than any other single idea. A student of history, who is at the same time an humble devotee of Kṛṣṇa by heredity, environment and conviction, makes an attempt here to trace the development of the ideas relating to Kṛṣṇa from the days of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* to the present time. It is difficult for the present writer to subscribe to the views of those historians who refuse to believe anything to have existed on earth until and unless its remains have been unearthed by excavations. Dr. A. L. Basham, the doyen of historians, recently observed in course of a lecture that Kṛṣṇa existed many centuries prior to the Bhārata War, because he has found his name occurring in the *Atharva-veda*. On being asked by the present writer to substantiate this he explained that the *Atharva-veda* is much earlier than the *Mahābhārata* where his exploits are described and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which contains his teaching. But it may be pointed out that mere identity of name cannot be taken as a safe guide for any historical conclusion. In the *Ṛgveda* too, we come across a Kṛṣṇa who is the author of a hymn, but nobody has ever suggested that he is identical with the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhārata War. Nobody is more conscious of the manifold shortcomings of the work than the writer himself. He knows that he can neither satisfy the high objective and rationalistic tests of professional historians, nor can he hope to secure

approval of the orthodox votaries of Kṛṣṇa for his study in the conflicting statements of the various ancient and medieval texts. He has tried to follow the method he adopted some thirty years ago in making a comparative study of the various source materials on the life of Caitanya. But the task here is thousandfold more difficult because of the remote antiquity of the personage concerned and also of the vastness of the materials one has to sift from. He can only crave the indulgence of his readers.

The author is thankful to the authorities of the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture of the University of Calcutta under the U. G. C. scheme for inviting him to deliver six lectures on the subject. He owes a profound debt of gratitude to Prof. D. C. Sircar who suggested the title of the book, went through the first draft of three of the lectures and offered some valuable suggestions. Dr. R. C. Majumdar was good enough to go through the concluding chapter and give fruitful advice. Dr. Radhakamal Mookerji also kindly suggested certain references. His friend and next-door neighbour, Dr. Tarapada Bhattacharyya, and his eldest son, Dr. Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar, Reader in History, Patna University, have gone through the whole of the manuscript and corrected the typographical and a few other mistakes. But none of these scholars is in any way responsible for the views expressed here nor for the shortcomings of the book.

Gola Dariapur,
Patna 4.

BIMANBEHARI MAJUMDAR

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Chapter I

CHRONOLOGICAL PUZZLES REGARDING THE LIFE AND TIME OF KṚṢṆA.

As Viṣṇu pervades all the worlds and through them causes himself to be permeated[1], so does Kṛṣṇa permeate Indian art, literature, ethics, philosophy and religion. But no other figure in the history of Indian culture has given rise to so much controversy as Kṛṣṇa. The unholy attempt to prove child Kṛṣṇa as the counterpart of Christ and to show the indebtedness of Vaiṣṇavism to Christianity has been given up. But many theories, which are insufficiently based on positive evidence, are still contending for the mastery of the field. The Western scholars at first treated Kṛṣṇa as a myth. He was identified with the solar deity. One writer described Kṛṣṇa as 'a complex quality, mingling myths of fire, lightning, storm, heaven and sun.'[2] Another scholar was convinced that he was the spirit of reviving vegetation.[3] But many of the Orientalists in the present century have arrived at the conclusion that Kṛṣṇa was a Kṣatṛiya warrior who fought at Kurukṣetra, but most of them still regard the events of his life at Vraja as unworthy myth. A German scholar observed in 1933 : "That Kṛṣṇa himself was a historical figure is indeed quite indubitable." He analyses the Govardhana sacrifice episode, as related in the *Harivaṁśa* (Ch. 72) and concludes : "From behind the

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1 *Nṛisiṁha-pūrva-tāpaniya*, 2. 4. The *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā* 52. 34 traces Viṣṇu to the root *Viṣ*, meaning permeation.

2 A Barth : *The Religions of India*, p. 168.

3 A Keith : *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 171.

veils of the legend in the *Harivaṁśa*, features rise into prominence which combine together to form a readily intelligible figure, amply substantiated by historical analogies, a man in whom the ideals of his ancient race still live, who rescues and extricates his people from the influence of an intrusive foreign culture which is destroying its communal life, becomes its leader and at the same time, as the preserver and reformer who moulds afresh the ancient ancestral cult, acquires the status of its religious hero."[4] Kṛṣṇa is regarded here as an un-Aryan defender of the ancient pastoral organization. The writer conveniently ignores other trends of traditions which speak of Balarāma as the Halī, the holder of the plough, the typical symbol of agricultural society. One brother could not have represented the pastoral organization and the other the agricultural economy. The whole tradition of Indian culture regards Kṛṣṇa as a Yādava, a Kṣatriya prince, who had to spend his early life at Vraja amongst the Gopas for the sake of security against the hostility of Kaṁsa. This is but one of the examples how theories have been built up on slenderest evidence. In these lectures earnest efforts will be made to steer clear of the tendency to theorising. The lectures will aim at discussing the relative value of the narrations of events relating to the various events in the life of Kṛṣṇa as described in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṁśa*, the *Purāṇas*, secular literature, sculptures, and epigraphy.

The earliest mention of Kṛṣṇa is to be found in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*.[5] Almost all the scholars have asserted that Devakīputra Kṛṣṇa is described there as the disciple of Ghora Āṅgirasa. But the original text does not say

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4 Rudolf Otto : *The Original Gitā*, p. 268.

5 *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, III. 17. 6.

so. It is Saṅkarācārya, who in his commentary on the above-mentioned *Upaniṣad*, said that Kṛṣṇa was the disciple of Ghora Āṅgirasa. The passage has got to be studied with reference to its context, which is given below. The *Upaniṣad* describes here man's life in the form of *soma*-sācrifice ; the natural functions—eating, drinking, procreating etc. are interpreted as elements of the sacrifice and the cardinal virtues are described as the reward of the sacrifice.

1. When one hungers and thirsts and does not enjoy himself—that is his *Dīkṣā* (consecration ceremony).
2. When one eats and drinks and enjoys himself—then he joins the *Upasada* ceremonies.
3. When one laughs and eats and practises sexual intercourse—then he joins in the chant and recitation (of the *Sāma Veda*).
4. Austerity (*tapo*), almsgiving (*dāna*), uprightness (*arjavam*), non-injury to creatures (*ahiṁsā*), truthfulness (*satyavacanam*), these are one's gifts for the priests.
5. Therefore they say, 'He will procreate.' He has procreated—that is his rebirth. Death is an ablution after the ceremony.
6. When Ghora Āṅgirasa said (*uktvā*) this, he also told (*uvāca*) 'Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra—for he had become free from desire—' In the final hour one should take refuge in these three thoughts. "You are the Indestructible (*akṣita*) ; you are the unshaken (*acyuta*) ; you are the very essence of life (*prāṇa*)."* On this point there

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*Following the lead of Śaṅkarācārya this passage is usually translated as follows : "Ghora Āṅgirasa explained to his disciple Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki : Let him when his end approaches meditate on these three—O Thou art the Imperishable. Thou art the unfailing. Thou art the

are the following verses of the *Ṛgveda :* "They see the morning light of that primeval seed which burns beyond the sky : Having beheld the superior light from beyond the darkness, we go to the Sun-God amọngst the gods, to the highest light."[6]

Our contention is that in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* Ghora Āṅgirasa already addresses Kṛṣṇa as Acyuta, the infallible. In the *Gītā* we find this term being used thrice and each time Arjuna calls Kṛṣṇa as Acyuta.[7] The Purāṇic tradition does not recognise Ghora Āṅgirasa as a teacher of Kṛṣṇa. Sāndīpani is the teacher of Kṛṣṇa[8] and Garga is the family priest of the Yādavas. One of the grounds on which the identification of the Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa with the Purāṇic Kṛṣṇa has been rejected by a few scholars is this difference in the name of Kṛṣṇa's teacher.[9] No such difficulty need arise if our interpretation is accepted. It also removes the necessity of admitting the existence of Vāsudeva as originally distinct from that of Kṛṣṇa. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mentions Vāsudeva as

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True Essence of life. Hearing this Kṛṣṇa lost all thirst for knowledge." But in the original there is no word implying discipleship of Kṛṣṇa or explanation by Ghora Āṅgirasa. The words '*Apipāsa eva Sa vabhūva*' do not imply that Kṛṣṇa lost all thirst for further knowledge. Hume has translated it thus : "When Ghora Āṅgirasa explained this to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki, he also explained—for he had become free from desire" — (R. A. Hume : *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*. O.U.P. 1921). Jacobi translates it thus : "He who has become exempt from desire should repeat at the time of his death, these three :" (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII. 196).

6 *Ṛgveda*, VIII. VI. 30 and 1.1.10, translation by Jacobi (op.cit.).

7 *Gītā*, I. 21, XI. 42, XVIII. 73.

8 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 21. 19-22.

9 S. K. De in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 297-301.

god together with Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu.[10] Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar holds that the word Vāsudeva was not originally a patronymic but the name of a member of the Sātvata, or Vṛṣṇi race, 'who had a religion of their own, in which Vāsudeva was worshipped as the Supreme Being'.[11(a)] Had the people of the Sātvata or Vṛṣṇi clan been really worshippers of Vāsudeva in the pre-Kṛṣṇa age, there would have been certainly some reference to this fact in the *Mahābhārata*, *Harivaṁśa* and the vast mass of Purāṇic literature. But no where do we get any such reference. Hopkins, Keith and Ruben also could not find any reason to support Bhandarkar's contention that Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva are two different persons.[11(b)] Jacobi holds that "when the Vedic period drew towards its end, Vāsudeva was considered an equal of Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu, but that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, was still regarded in the Vedic period as a wise man enquiring into the highest truth, and only at some later time was he put on an equality with Viṣṇu. We conclude that Vāsudeva, the god, and Kṛṣṇa, the sage, were originally different from one another, and only afterwards became, by a syncretism of beliefs, one deity, thus giving rise to or bringing to perfection a theory of incarnation."[12] But Indian tradition does not know of Devakīputra Kṛṣṇa as a sage, though Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata* describes him as a master of the *Vedas* and the *Vedāṅgas*.[13] The example of Janaka shows that it was not unusual for the Kṣatriyas to be highly proficient in the Upaniṣadic knowledge. Some scholars adduce the proof of *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā* to show

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10 *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka*, X. 1.6.

11(a) R. G. Bhandarkar : *Vaishnavism, Saivism etc.*

11(b) J. R. A. S., 1915, pp. 838-41 and 1941, p. 247.

12 *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII. p. 195.

13 *Mbh.* II. 35. 18.

that the term Vāsudeva means the God who is immanent in the universe and the universe is immanent in him.[14] But they should recognise the fact that such derivatīon of names was much too common in comparatively later age.

If Kṛṣṇa was regarded as Acyuta in the days of *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, he must have flourished some centuries earlier than the date of its composition. There is considerable difference of opinion regarding the period in which Kṛṣṇa flourished. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states : "When the portion Viṣṇu (that had been born from Vasudeva) returned to heaven, then the *Kali* age commenced. As long as the earth was touched by his sacred feet, the *Kali* age could not affect it."[15] This is corroborated by the *Vāyu*[16], *Matsya*[17], *Brahmāṇḍa*[18], *Brahma*[19] and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*[20] The latter asserts that when Kṛṣṇa disappeared from this world with *Dharma* and the supreme knowledge, the *Kali-yuga* set in and the world was enveloped in darkness of ignorance, to dispel which, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* arose like the Sun. All these go to show that in ancient India, Kṛṣṇa's demise was considered as an epoch-making event. But when did the *Kali* age begin ?

Kṛṣṇa has been described in the Belāva copperplate inscription of Bhojavarman as *Mahābhārata-sūtradhāra*, the leading figure of the *Mahābhārata*. But the epigraphic and literary records of the seventh century A.D. reveal a considerable difference of opinion regarding the exact year

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14 Rudolf Otto : *The Original Gitā*, p. 254.
15 *Viṣṇu* P. IV. 24. 35, 36, 40.
16 *Vāyu*, 99. 428-29.
17 *Matsya*, 273. 49-50.
18 *Brahmāṇḍa*, III. 74. 241.
19 *Brahma*, 212. 8.
20 *Bhāgavata*, XII. 2. 29-30.

when the Bhārata War took place. Āryabhaṭ wrote at the fag end of the fifth century A.D. that the *Kali* era commenced in 3102 B. C. The Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II supports this view because it is stated therein that it was inscribed in *Śaka* year 556 (expired) and 3735 years after the close of the Bhārata War. Bhāskarācārya also in his *Siddhānta Śirōmaṇi* says that 3179 years had expired when the Śaka era commenced. But this is contradicted by Varāhamihira who holds that the *Śaka* era began 2526 years after the accession of Yudhiṣṭhira and that Yudhiṣṭhira ascended the throne in the year 653 of the *Kali* era.[21] Kalhaṇa corroborates this view.[22] Thus the big gap of 653 years has furnished one of the grounds to historians for arriving at the conclusion that the *Kali* era was "invented by the Hindu astronomers and chronologists for the purposes of their calculations some thirtyfive centuries after the initial point which they assigned to it."[23]

The *Purāṇas* too do not support the view that the Bhārata War took place either in 3102 or 2526 B.C. The *Matsya Purāṇa* records that a period of 1050 years separated the dates of the coronation of Mahāpadma Nanda and the birth of Parīkṣit.[24] The *Vāyu* and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* also speak in similar strain, though some manuscripts read the words *evaṁ varṣasahasram tu jñeyam pañchāśaduttaram* as *pañcha-śatottaram* (1500) or *śatam pañchadaśottaram* (1155). F.E. Pargiter, who has made a detailed study of the dynastic genealogies contained in the *Purāṇas*, assumes that Mahāpadma Nanda ascended the throne in 402 B.C.,[25] but Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri accepting the findings of Geiger

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21 *Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, XIII.
22 *Rājataraṅginī*, I. 51.
23 Fleet, *J.R.A.S.*, 1911, pp. 479 ff. and 675 ff.
24 *Matsya*, 273. 35.
25 F.E. Pargiter : *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 180.

holds the date to be 343 B.C.[26] If this calculation is accepted, the Bhārata War would have to be dated roughly speaking, in *circa* 1400 B.C. K. P. Jayaswal advocated this view. But Pargiter, calculating the date on an average of 18 years for each king of the later period and 20 years for Yudhiṣṭhira and his four immediate successors, came to the conclusion that the Bhārata War occured in 950 B.C. He must have been influenced by Fleet, who has argued that the events mentioned in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth *parvas* of the *Mahābhārata* covered only a period of twenty years.[27] Both Fleet and Pargiter ignored the fact that the *Mahābhārata* distinctly states at several places that Kṛṣṇa left this world thirty-six years after the Bhārata War[28] and according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* Yudhiṣṭhira abdicated the sovereignty in favour of Parīkṣit as soon as "the incarnation of the external Viṣṇu had departed".[29] Pargiter also refuses to believe in the definite statement of the *Mahābhārata* that the reign of Parīkṣit covered a period of sixty years.[30] It might be said in his favour that the great commentator Nīlakaṇṭha too did not rely on this statement. He interpreted it as the period commencing from the birth of Parīkṣit, though Yudhiṣṭhira was the ruler during the first thirty-six years.

Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri has made calculations on the basis of the information supplied by the Vedic literature. He came to the conclusion that the Bhārata War took place in about 850 B.C. Does such a date give sufficient

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26 H. C. Raychaudhuri : *Early History of the Vaisnava Sect*, p. 64.
27 Fleet : *J.R.A.S.*, 1911.
28 *Mbh.* XI. 25. 44 ; XVI. 1. 16 ; XVI. 3. 20.
29 *Viṣṇu P.*, IV. 24.
30 *Mbh.* I. 49.

time for the growth of the tradition about Kṛṣṇa's relation with Ghora Āṅgirasa as described in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*? Dr. Raychaudhuri's views were assailed by A. S. Altekar in his Presidential address at the Archaic and Early Cultural History section of the Indian History Congress held in Calcutta in 1939. He argued that as the 40 kings of the Eastern Chālukya dynasty covered a period of 656 years, the average length of a reign should be taken as 16 years and 6 months. He also drew upon the lists of teachers and pupils preserved in the Vedic literature and calculated that it was "almost certain that the Bhārata War did really take place in c. 1400 B.C., as maintained by the Purāṇic tradition."[31] But twenty years later while preparing his Presidential address for the Gauhati session of the Indian History Congress in 1959, he again used the analogy of the Eastern Chālukya kings, but this time he cited the instance not of 40 kings for 656 years, but of 32 kings only reigning for 461 years, and thus giving the average reign length of 14 years and 6 months. This suited him better for supporting Pargiter's date of the Bhārata War in 950 B.C.[32] While he had criticised Pargiter's date twenty years ago, he now accepted it in 1959. He further strengthened Pargiter's conclusions by citing the results of the excavations at Lothal, which according to his interpretation revealed by the carbon 14 dating method that the Harappans remained in possession of northern Gujarat till 1200 B.C. But those who conducted the excavations at Lothal state : "Three charcoal specimens from the late levels of Phase III of Lothal have been dated 1900 to 2000 B.C. on the basis of which Phase I of Lothal A

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31 *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1939, p. 68.

32 *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1959, pp. 26-29.

may be dated to 2450 B.C."[33] Lothal, belonging to the Dholka Taluka, is situated at a distance of about 18 miles from Ahmedabad. Dr. Altekar suggests that Kṛṣṇa colonised Dvārakā after the disappearance of the Harappan culture in northern Gujarat. But modern Dvārakā is situated at a distance of 235 miles south-west of Ahmedabad and no evidence has as yet been found to show that Dvārakā or even the port of Okha, where the original Dvārakā is said to have been located had ever been connected with the Harappan culture. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that according to the Paurāṇic tradition, Dvārakā arose at the old site of Kuśasthalī. In any case the carbon 14 dating determination tends to show, according to B. B. Lal, that the working date for the end of the Harappan culture. viz. 1500 B.C., may have to be 'pushed back' by about a couple of centuries. What exactly was happening in the Ganga-Yamuna valley and in central and eastern India at the time of the Harappan occupation of the north-west is rather difficult to say with certainty."[34] This admission seems to have changed the conclusion which the same writer arrived at while writing the *Excavation at Hastināpur and other Explorations in the upper Ganga and Sutlej Basins 1950-52*, wherein he surmised that the date of the *Mahābhārata* battle fell within Period II (c. 1100 to 800 B.C.) at Hastināpur.[35] In the article referred to above he appears to have accepted *circa* 950 B.C. as the date of the *Mahābhārata* battle. A. Ghosh, Director of Archaeological Survey, in his Introductory Note to the Volume referred to above, sounded a note of warning when he wrote : "Beyond

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33 *Ancient India*, Bulletin of the Arch. Survey of India, Nos. 18 & 19, 1962 and 1963, p. 25.

34 *Ibid.* p. 219.

35 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10 and 11, 1954 and 1955, pp. 150-151.

the facts that Hastināpur, the reputed capital of the Kauravas, was found to be occupied by a people whose distinctive ceramics were the Painted Grey Ware in a period which might roughly have synchronised with the date of the origin of the nucleus of the *Mahābhārata* story, that the occupation came to an end with a heavy flood and that this Ware is found at many early sites, some of which are connected either in literature or by tradition, with the epic heroes, the excavation has no bearing on the authenticity or otherwise of the epic-tale".[36]

Many of those who have devoted their life to the unearthing of the ancient history of India have got scant regard for the *Purāṇas*. This is probably due to the facts (a) that the *Purāṇas* do not usually mention dates and where they do so, there appear discrepancies amongst the different *Purāṇas*, (b) that the *Purāṇas* continued to grow by the accretion of new legends, episodes, ceremonies etc. and no institution has as yet published a scientific edition of any *Purāṇa* on the model of the critical edition of *Mahābhārata*; (c) that religious reformers from Rammohan to Dayananda regarded them as products of degenerate age and (d) that many of the foreign scholars are reluctant to believe that the roots of Indian civilisation could reach back to such hoary antiquity as the *Purāṇas* assert. A time has now arrived for a closer and more critical study of the *Purāṇas*. Some scholars have already taken up this work and attained considerable success. The evidence of the *Purāṇas* cannot be lightly set aside because a class of people called Sūta, Paurāṇika and Vyāsa kept up these records from generation to generation with considerable care. Their descendants still bear the surname Paurāṇika in Mahārāṣṭra and Gujarat and Vyāsa in northern India. In view of these facts one

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36 *Ibid.* p. 3.

is tempted to accept the Paurāṇic tradition to the effect that nearly 1050 years elapsed between the birth of Parīkṣit and the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda and to hold that the Bhārata War took place about 1400 B.C. But the acceptance of this date would mean the rejection of the strong Jaina tradition, which makes Kṛṣṇa a contemporary of Ariṣṭanemi, the twenty-second Tīrthaṁkara.[37] The Bijholi Rock inscription of Chāhamāna Someśvara dated V. S. 1226 states that Nemināth blew off the Pāñchajanya conch of Lord Kṛṣṇa by the breath of his nose, pulled his bow Śṛṅga with his thumb and shook Halabhṛt or Balarāma with his finger.[38]

The date of Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Tīrthaṁkara is believed to have been near about 817 B. C. and Nemināth or Ariṣṭanemi flourished more than one hundred years before him. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to hold that Kṛṣṇa flourished about a millenium before the birth of Christ.

Conflicting statements regarding the period in which Kṛṣṇa lived might make some sceptical about the historicity of Kṛṣṇa. It should be remembered, however, that the Christian era and the dates of birth, ministration and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth offer somewhat similar chronological puzzles though he lived probably one thousand years after Kṛṣṇa.[39]

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37 *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, No. 22; *Antagaḍadasāo* (O.T.F., Vol. XVIII), pp. 67-82 and Jaina *Harivaṁśa*.

38 *E. I.* XXVI. 88.

39 Jesus was not born in 1 A. D. as is commonly believed, but at least 4 to 6 years before that date. St. Matthew (II. 1) says that Jesus was born "in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King." Herod is known to have died in 4 B. C. Jesus, therefore, must have been born some time before that date. St. Luke (II. 1)

The history of Christianity shows that it does not take centuries to raise a human being to the status of God. Jesus was hailed as the Christ or the Anointed Messiah even during his lifetime. Caitanya was worshipped as the supreme God by leading Brāhmaṇa scholars like Advaita[40] and Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma[41] respectively at Navadvīpa and Purī when he was in his twenties. Kavi Karṇapura Paramānanda Sen, represented him as Kṛṣṇa in his *Caitanya Caritāmṛta Mahākāvya*, which was written in Sanskrit only nine years after his demise. In our own lifetime we are noticing the process of deification of Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa. None of the

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hints that Jesus was born during a census carried out in Syria by the Roman legate Cyrenius. But this census was taken in 6 A. D. This makes the date of birth of Jesus at least a decade after the time recorded by St. Matthew. Tertullian writes that a census was taken in Judea while Saturnius, the penultimate predecessor of Quirinius, was legate, that is, between 9 and 6 B. C. If Quirinius or Cyrenius is supposed to have been an associate legate with Saturnius, a date about 6 B. C. for the birth of Jesus may be suggested and thus the apparently irreconciliable statements of St. Matthew and St. Luke might be reconciled. Then again St. Luke (IV. 19) avers that the ministry of Jesus lasted only about a year ; St. Mark implies (II. 23, V. 39, VI. 45-52) a ministry of at least two years and St. John (II. 13, VI. 4 and XII. 1) mentions his ministration during three Passovers, which might have occurred during two or three years in A. D. 28, 29 and 30. Jesus thus must have lived for 35 or 36 years, though the length of his life is usually stated to have been 33 years. These discrepancies do not make Jesus merely a legendary figure. It may, however, be said that whereas in case of Jesus it is a discrepancy of a few years only, in the case of Kṛṣṇa, the gap is of several centuries. Disregard for the recording of dates in ancient Indian literature is responsible for it.

40 *Caitanya Bhāgavata*, II. 9.

41 *Ibid.* III. 3 and Bimanbehari Majumdar : *Caitanya Chariter Upādāna*.

founders of great religions of the world came to be worshipped as God seven or eight hundred years after their death.

Some scholars hold that Kṛṣṇa was not regarded as God even at the time of Pāṇini. The date of Pāṇini is now accepted to be the 5th century B. C. because his famous grammar shows definite evidence of the influence of Buddhism.[42] When Pāṇini mentions the compound, *Vāsudevārjunābhyāṁ būṁ*[43] he goes against his own rule[44], according to which the shorter word, Arjuna should have been placed first. The inversion of the order in the compound, according to Jacobi, "was apparently occasioned by Pāṇini's regarding Vāsudeva as superior to Arjuna, *abhyarhita*, though the rule which assigns the first place in a *Dandva* compound to the *abhyarhita* was first given by Kātyāyana, his successor."[45] Kātyāyana, who is assigned to the fourth century B. C. states that the name of the (more) venerable person should be placed first in a coordinate compound, irrespective of the number of vowels. The *Mahābhārata*, in some form or other, was known to Pāṇini.[46] The epic refers to the joint worship of Arjuna and Vāsudeva, who in their previous birth were the sages or gods Nara and Nārāyaṇa.[47]

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42 V. S. Agrawala : *India as Known to Pāṇini.*

43 Pāṇini - *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV. III. 98

44 *Ibid* II. II. 33.

45 *Kātyāyana* II. 2. 34. *Vārtt.* 4 quoted by Jacobi, *Op- Cit.* P. 195.

46 Pāṇini, VI. 2. 38 the term *'mahān'* is joined with the word Bhārata. This must refer to the book and not to a person, because no one in ancient India is known to have such a name as *Mahābhārata.* Pāṇini has mentioned the names of Yudhiṣṭhira (VIII. 3. 95), Kunti (IV. 1. 176) Arjuna (IV. 3. 98) Nakula (IV. 1. 103) and possibly of the son of Droṇa (IV. 1. 103).

47 *Mbh.* V. 48. 8.

Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* alludes to the killing of Kaṁsa by Kṛṣṇa as an event of the remote past - *Jaghāna Kaṁsa kila Vāsudevaḥ.*[48] He speaks of worshippers of Vāsudeva as Vāsudevakas. He also refers to Kaṁsa as dishonest[49] and refers to the dramatic representation of the incident, *Kaṁsavadha.*[50] In explaining Pāṇini, IV. 2. 98 Patañjali definitely says that Vāsudeva is a synonym (*Samjñā* of the *Bhagavant*). Even Weber admits that Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa stood in a close relationship, otherwise Patañjali would not have mentioned the dramas *Balibandha* and *Kaṁsavadha* together.[51] Keith observes: "There seems, indeed, no ground whatever to deny that they were already identified and that this was the case is indicated by the fact that the *Mahābhāṣya* tells us that in the *Kaṁsavadha* the Granthikas divided themselves into two parties, the one followers of Kaṁsa, the other followers of Kṛṣṇa, and that the former were *Kālamukhāḥ* and the latter *Raktamukhāḥ.*"[52] One scholar holds that the *Arthaśāstra* was written earlier than the *Mahābhāṣya* and points out that Kauṭilya associates Kṛṣṇa with Kaṁsa and other evil spirits.[53] He tries to prove that the divinity of Kṛṣṇa had not been admitted at the time of the *Arthaśāstra.* But he overlooks the fact that Kauṭilya refers to the worshippers of Saṅkarṣaṇa, in the following words: "Spies disguised as ascetics with shaved head or braided hair and to be worshippers of god Saṅkarṣaṇa may mix their sacrificial beverage with the juice of the

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48 *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini, III. 2. 111.
49 *Ibid.* II. 3. 36.
50 *Ibid.* III. 1. 26.
51 Weber: *Ind. Stud.* p. 491.
52 J. *R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 172.
53 *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1959, p. 62.

madana plant (and give to the cowherds) and carry off the cattle."[54] Early inscriptions show that Saṅkarṣaṇa was associated with Kṛṣṇa in matters of worship. Varāhamihira in his *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* prescribes that the image of *Baladeva* "must be made having a plough in his right hand, with eyes lively from drink, and wearing a single ear-ring."[55] An image of Balarāma belonging to the 2nd or 1st century B. C. has been found at Mathura. V. S. Agrawala considers it to be the earliest representation of any Brāhmaṇical deity in the whole field of Hindu iconography.[56] The worship of Balarāma continued at least up to the 6th century A. D. as the Umachal inscription of Surendravarman proves.[57]

Megasthenes, who was a contemporary of Kauṭilya, definitely states that "Herakles was worshipped by the inhabitants of the plains - especially by the Sourasenai, an Indian tribe possessed of two large cities, Methora and Kleisobora (Krishnapura) and who had a navigable river, the Jobares (Yamunā), flowing through the territories."[58] There can be no doubt that here Kṛṣṇa has been referred to as Heracles. Quintus Curtius also writes in his *History of Alexander the Great*, that "an image of Herakles was carried in front of the army of Porus as he advanced against Alexander. This acted as the strongest of all incentives to make the soldiers fight well."[59]

According to Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar the earliest epigraphic reference to the worship of Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva

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54 *Arthaśāstra*, Eng. trs. Shamasastri, p. 485.

55 *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, XVIII, 36.

56 V. S. Agrawala : *Handbook of the sculpture in the Curzon Museum of Arch., Mathura.*

57 D. C. Sircar : *E. I.* XXXI, pp. 67 ff.

58 Mc'crindle—*Ancient India as described in Classical literature*, p. 64.

59 R. C. Majumdar : *Classical Accounts*, pp. 119-120.

occurs in an inscription found at Ghosūṇḍī, near Nagarī, eight miles north of Chitorgarh in Rajputana. It records the erection of a stone enclosure *pūjā-śilā-prākāra* on a site called *Nārāyaṇa-vāṭaka* (apparently the place where the temple was standing) by Gājāyana, son of Parāśara in connection with the divinities mentioned above.[60] Earlier scholars ascribed it to the 3rd or 2nd century B. C.,[61] but Dr. D. C. Sircar has proved that it can not be earlier than the second half of the first century B. C.[62]

Heliodorus, the Greek ambassador of Antialkidas to King Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra, who became a convert to Bhāgavatism erected the famous Besnagar (near Bhilsa in the former Gwalior State in the M. P.) a Garuḍa column in the first half of the second century B. C. The inscription on this column describes Vāsudeva as *Devadeva*, the greatest of gods.[63] In the same site has been found a column which had a *makara* on its head. This shows that Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa, was also worshipped there, because, the former being identified as an incarnation of Kāma had crocodile as his symbol.

The next important inscription comes from Nānāghāt, which is situated in the Western Ghat, half-way between Poona and Nasik. It has been assigned to the end of the second century B. C. or early first century B. C.[64] In it Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva have been invoked along with Dharma, Indra and the guardians of the four cardinal points, Yama, Varuṇa, Kuvera and Vāsava. This

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60 D. R. Bhandarkar : *The Archaeological Remains and Excavations at Nagari*, Memoir No. 4 of the A. S. of India (1920) ; Sircar : Sel. Inser. (2nd ed), p. 90 f.

61 Buhler : *Indian Paleography*, p. 32 ; R. P. Chanda : *Memoir A. S. of India*, No. 5, p. 163.

62 E. I. XXXI. p 91.

63 *Memoir Arch. Survey of India*, No. 5, p 152.

64 *E. I.* X , App. p. 121.

inscription is remarkable because it mentions the names of Vedic gods along with Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa. This shows that in the second century B. C. Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa were not considered as mythical persons.

An inscription belonging to the first century B. C. comes from Morā, a village situated to the west of Mathura city, at a distance of 7 miles. It records the worship of five great heroes of the Vṛṣṇi branch of the Yādava tribe - *Bhagavatāṁ vṛṣṇināṁ pañcavīrāṇāṁ pratimāḥ.* The inscription clearly mentions that it was written during the time of Śoḍāsa, son of Mahākṣatrapa Rañjuvula.[65] J. N. Banerjea identifies the five heroes on the basis of the evidence of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (97. 1-2) as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, his elder brother, Pradyumna, his eldest son, Sāmba, his son by Jāmbavatī and Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna.[66] But it may be noted here that the *Vāyu Purāṇa* does not state the relation between the five heroes. It is the *Matsya Purāṇa*, which reveals that Kṛṣṇa's wife Rukmiṇī was the mother of Pradyumna ; his son was Aniruddha and Aniruddha's son was Sāmba.[67] If this identification is accepted four generations of Vṛṣṇis were worshipped together - Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Sāmba. It is quite probable that there were two Sāmbas in that family - one, a son of Vāsudeva and Jāmbavatī, who was born on the same day as Pradyumna, was stolen by Samvara and another, the son of Aniruddha. The elder Sāmba must have been a middle aged man at that time of the *Muṣalaparva* incident because he is described as one present at the marriage ceremony of

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65 Rama Prasad Chanda : *Archaeology and Vaisnava Tradition* (M. A. S. I. No. 5), p. 170.

66 J. N. Banerjea : *Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. pp. 93, 386.

67 *Matsya Purāṇa*, 47. 23.

Subhadrā.[68] As such he could not have been dressed up as a pregnant young lady. The Junior Sāmba was in all probability the son of Aniruddha and a great-grandson of Kṛṣṇa, as described in the *Matsya Purāṇa.*

Another inscription of the time of Mahākṣatrapa Śoḍāsa is preserved in the Mathura museum (No. 367). It is incised in Sanskrit on a lintel of a Kṛṣṇa temple, which according to V. S. Agrawala, is the earliest reference to a temple of Bhagavāna Vāsudeva at Mathura.[69]

The earliest epigraphic record referring to a consort of Kṛṣṇa is the Tusam rock-inscription, belonging to the fourth century A. D. Curiously enough it does not refer to Rukmiṇī or Satyabhāmā, who are depicted in the *Purāṇas* as the favourite queens of Kṛṣṇa, but to Jāmbavati. Viṣṇu is described as "the mighty bee on the water-lily which is the face of Jāmbavatī."[70] In the Bhitarī stone-pillar inscription of Skanda Gupta, there is an allusion to the touching scene of Kṛṣṇa approaching his mother Devakī after the killing of Kaṁsa, who had kept her imprisoned[71]—*Hata-ripur = iva Kṛṣṇō Devakīm = abhyupetaḥ.*

Three inscriptions of the kings of Assam refer to the time and exploits of Kṛṣṇa. The Nidhanpur plates of Bhāskaravarman refer to Naraka and Bhagadatta, the contemporaries of Kṛṣṇa.[72] Bhagadatta's son was Vajradatta, whose descendants ruled over Kāmarūpa for 3000 years ; then Puṣyavarman of the same family became King and Bhāskaravarman was twelfth in descent from him and a contemporary of Harṣavardhana. According to Kane, this inscription lends support to the views of Varāhamihira,

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68 *Mbh.* I. 211. 9.
69 V. S. Agrawala—*Op. Cit.* pp. 92-93.
70 H. C. Raychaudhuri : *Early History of the Vaisnava Sect*, p. 165.
71 Fleet. C. *I. I. III.* Text p. 54.
72 *E. I.*, X. pp. 65-79.

who puts the date of the accession of Yudhiṣṭhira in the year 653 of the *Kali yuga*, corresponding to 2448 B. C.[73] The Doobi plates of Bhāskaravarman compares the activities of Supratiṣṭhitavarman and his younger brother Bhāskaravarman to the heroism of Bala and Acyuta when the latter stood unconquered in their fight with the demon chief Bāṇa.[74] It is interesting to note here that Bāṇa's capital Śoṇitapura is traditionally identified with Tejpur in Assam. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* relates how Uṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa, fell in love with Kṛṣṇa's grandson Aniruddha, who was brought to Bāṇa's palace by the magic power of her friend, Citralekhā.[75] Bāṇa discovered the Yādava prince and made him his prisoner. Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva and Pradyumna went to Śoṇitapura in search of Aniruddha and rescued him along with Uṣā after defeating Bāṇa. The Parbatiya plate of Vanamālavarmadeva, who flourished in the middle of the ninth century A. D., describes how Kṛṣṇa, having killed Naraka, was moved to pity by the lamentations of his wife and allowed his sons Bhagadatta and Vajradatta to go unpunished.[76] Here Vajradatta is described as the brother of Bhagadatta, though the Nidhanpur plate describes him as the son of Bhagadatta. This shows that mistakes and confusion are not the characteristic features of the *Purāṇas* alone and that even the royal panegyrists writing about the same line of kings are not free from these defects. A deviation from the Purāṇic account is also noticeable in this inscription. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[77], the *Bhāgavata*[78] and the *Harivaṁśa*[79]

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73 Kane—*History of the Dharmaśāstra*, III, pp. 898-899.
74 *E. I.* XXX (1954), p. 203.
75 *Viṣṇu* P., V. 33.
76 *E. I.* XXIX, Pt. V., p. 147, Verse 4.
77 *Viṣṇu* P., V. 29.
78 *Bh.* X. 59. 32.
79 *HV.* II. 63.

speak of Kṛṣṇa sparing Naraka's son at the intercession of Naraka's mother, and not of his wife, as the inscription relates.

Rajputana, which borders on the Mathura region has been the findspot of many inscriptions and images relating to Kṛṣṇa. The earliest epigraphic reference to his beloved Rādhā also occurs in an inscription found at Mandor, the ancient capital of the former Udaipur state. It belongs to the eighth or ninth century A. D.[80] The next epigraphic reference to the love of Kṛṣṇa for Rādhā is to be found in the three inscriptions of Vākpati Muñja, dated 974, 982 and 986 A. D.[81] These will be discussed fully in our third lecture.

The Ajmer stone-inscription, which is assigned to the twelfth century, refers to Kṛṣṇa as the eighth Avatāra, though Jayadeva belonging to the same period puts Haladhara or Baladeva as the eighth incarnation.[82] The Belāva plate of Bhojavarman speaks of Kṛṣṇa as *aṁśakritāvatāra* or partial incarnation.[83] This inscription is also remarkable for describing Kṛṣṇa as *gopī-śata-kelikāra* one who sported with hundred of Gopīs or milk-maids. Another notable feature of this inscription is that it speaks of the genealogy of Kṛṣṇa, who sprang from the race of the Moon. "From him was born Budha, son of Rohiṇī and from him Pururavas, son of Ilā, who was chosen (as the husband) by Kīrti, Urvaśī and Bhū. He again, like Manu procreated Āyu; from that King was born the lord of the Earth Nahuṣa, and a son, Mahārāja Yayāti sprang from him. He also begot Yadu from whom has emanated

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80 *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1954, p. 163.
81 *E. I.* XXIII, pp. 108 ff.
82 *E. I.* XXIX. pt. VI. 1952, p. 179.
83 *E. I.* XII. pp. 37-43.

this line of kings in which Vīraśrī and Hari were seen many times as if in actual manifestation."[84] Here is a line of kings who feel legitimate pride in calling themselves as descendants of Kṛṣṇa. Dr. D. C. Sircar has brought out the interesting fact that in 1199 A. D. an inscription of the Andhra Pradesh refers to the temple of God Gopījanavallabha of Mantrakūṭa.[85]

Kṛṣṇa is famous as the Yādava belonging to the family of Yadu as Rāma is famous as Rāghava, the descendant of Raghu. But how many generations did actually intervene between *Rāma* and Kṛṣṇa? The *Mahābhārata* attempts to trace the line of ancestors of Kṛṣṇa at two places, but in both only skeleton accounts are given. In the *Droṇaparvan* it is said that in the line of Yadu there was born Devamīḍha, whose son was Śūra, whose son was Vasudeva and his son was Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa.[86] In the *Anuśāsanaparvan* a more elaborate genealogy is given as follows: Yadu-Kroṣṭu - Vṛjinvan - Rishadgu—Citraratha and in Citraratha's line were born Śūra-Vasudeva and Vāsudeva.[87] Even in this abbreviated account we find that the name of Svāha, the son of Vṛjinvan and father of Rishadgu, as given in the *Matsya*[88] and other *Purāṇas* has been omitted. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* there intervened 32 generations between Citraratha and Śūra. The *Mahābhārata* omitted these probably for two reasons. The first was that it was the business of the *Purāṇa* to relate genealogical lines and the *Mahābhārata* being an *Itihāsa* could remain silent over them.

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84 N. G. Majumdar's Translation in *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 21-22.

85 *E. I.* XXXIV. Pt. II (1961), p. 68.

86 *Mbh.* VII. 125. 6.

87 *Ibid.* XIII. 147.

88 *Matsya*, 44. 15. 1.

The other reason was that the *Mahābhārata* was primarily concerned with the Kuru family and not with the Yādavas. But the same can not be said of *Harivaṁśa*, whose name itself implies that it deals with the family of Hari or Kṛṣṇa. It also attempts a description of the ancestry of Kṛṣṇa at two places. In the earlier account it speaks of only five generations, namely Yadu-Kroṣṭu—Devamīḍhūṣa—Śūra—Vasudeva—Vāsudeva.[89] In the later description it mentions eleven generations, viz. Yadu—Mādhava—Sātvata—Bhīma—Andhaka—Raivata—Ṛkṣa—Viśvagarbha—Vasu— Vasudeva and Kṛṣṇa.[90] If in the earlier account 34 generations following Kroṣṭu and preceding Devamīḍhūṣa have been omitted, in the later account all the 36 generations from Yadu's son Kroṣṭu to Sātvata's father Jantu have been ignored. The *Harivaṁśa* states at one place[91] that Yadu was the son of Yayāti, but in the later account he is called the son of Haryāśva, belonging to the dynasty of Ikṣvāku.[92] He married Madhumatī, the daughter of *daitya* named Madhu and begat Yadu. The *Harivaṁśa* explains the statement further by saying that the Yaduvaṁśa emanated from the Ikṣvāku line. The *Mahābhārata* also gives the same information.[93] The name of Mādhava as the son of Yadu is not found in any *Purāṇa*. Pargiter calls this account "an excellent instance of a spurious genealogy"[94] though he accepts the verses establishing synchronism between Rāma, son of Daśaratha, with Bhīma, son of Sātvata. This sort of rejection of one part of a chapter as fabrication and acceptance of another part of

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89 *HV.* 1. 33 and 34.
90 *HV.* II. 38.
91 *HV.* I. 31. 18.
92 *HV.* II. 37. 12-13.
93 *Mbh.* XIII. 47.
94 Pargiter : *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 122.

the same chapter as genuine illustrates the method followed by Orientalists. The synchronism established by the *Harivaṁśa* is highly important. It shows that Rāma and Bhīma Sātvata were contemporary kings. It further relates the origin of the Mathurā town, which grew out of Madhuvana, the forest of Madhu which was cut down by Śatrughna after killing Lavaṇa, the son of Madhu. The *Rāmāyaṇa* says that Śatrughna installed his son Suvāhu in Mathurā,[95] but the *Harivaṁśa* claims that Bhīma reoccupied Mathurā and resided there for some time. Bhīma's son Andhaka reigned at Mathurā while Kuśa, the son of Rāma, was ruling at Ayodhyā. Kṛṣṇa was twelfth in descent from Bhīma Sātvata, the contemporary of Rāma Dāśarathī as will be apparent from the following tables constructed on the basis of a comparative study of all the *Purāṇas* by Pradhan[96] and Pargiter[97] respectively :

Pradhan	*Pargiter*
Bhīma Sātvata	No. 65 Sātvant
Andhaka	No. 67 Andhaka
Kukura	No. 69 Kukura
Vṛṣṇi—Dhṛṣṭa	No. 73 Vṛṣṇi
Kapōtaroman	No. 77 Kapōtaraman
Revata-Viloman-Tittiri	No. 80 Vilōman
Bhava-Chandanōdakadundubhi	No. 83 Nala
	No. 86 Abhijit
Punarvasu	No. 89 Punarvasu
Āhuka	
Devaka-Ugrasena	No. 92 Ugrasena
|	
Devakī Kaṁsa	No. 93 Kaṁsa
|	
Kṛṣṇa	

95 *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII. 108. 10.
96 Pradhan : *Chronology of Ancient India*. p. 40.
97 Pargiter, *Op. cit*. p. 148.

The names of Nala and Abhijit given in the list of Pargiter can not be found in the list compiled by Pradhan. The names of Āhuka given in Pradhan's list is omitted by Pargiter. The wide gaps in the number of synchronistic generation in Pargiter's list are also noteworthy. Eleven names of the Yādava line cover 93 – 65 = 28 generations. Such composite genealogical tables constructed on the basis of subjective methods of selection by scholars are widely different from what are given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata*.

Paternal line of Kṛṣṇa		*Maternal line of Kṛṣṇa*	
Viṣṇu P. (IV. 13, 14)	*Bhāgavata* (IX. 24)	*Viṣṇu P.* (IV. 14)	*Bhāgavata* (IX. 24)
Sātvata	Sātvata	Sātvata	Sātvata
		Andhaka	
Bhajamāna	Vṛṣṇi	Kukura	Kukura
Viduratha	Citraratha	Dhṛṣṭa	Vahṇi
Śūra	Viduratha	Kapōtaroman	Viloman
Śamī	Śūra	Viloman	Kapōtaroman
		Anu	Anu
		Ānakadundubhi	
Pratikṣatra	Bhajamāna	Abhijit	Andhaka
	Śini		Dundubhi
Svayambhoja			Avidya
	Bhoja		
Hṛdika	Hṛdika	Punarvasu	Punarvasu
Devamīḍhūṣa	Devamīḍh	Āhuka	Āhuka
Śūra	Śūra	Devaka Ugrasena	Devaka Ugrasena
Vasudeva	Vasudeva	Devakī Kaṁsa	Devakī Kaṁsa
Kṛṣṇa	Kṛṣṇa	Kṛṣṇa	Kṛṣṇa

The divergence between the names of ancestors of Kṛṣṇa from the seventh generation upward to five or six generations in the two sacred texts of the Vaiṣṇavas is inexplicable and remains a puzzle.

The *Mahābhārata* is considered the oldest and as such the most reliable source of the life-history of Kṛṣṇa. But the whole of the epic as we get it today, has not been composed by one single author. It has grown to its present size in course of nearly a thousand years. V. S. Sukthankar, the greatest authority on the *Mahābhārata* states : "Few scholars, I imagine, would now be inclined to deny that our epic text has undergone momentous alterations in course of its long and eventful history. It is now generally recognised that the *Bhārata* like the popular lays, ballads and early epics of all countries and all people, has always been a fluid text, adjusted to the varying needs of the occasion and the differing tastes of the audience..... It is a rapid motion picture reel of many ages of Indian culture—not necessarily factitive history arranged in a naive fashion : something like the sculptured panels on the gateways and the railings of the Buddhist Stūpa at Sanchi or the mural frescoes of Ajanta, with scenes telescoped all in one plane, without much regard to perspective or perhaps its own peculiar technique of perspective".[98]

As the epic has grown in this way in course of nearly one thousand years or so it is bound to reveal many statements which are inconsistent with one another and even mutually contradictory. But so far as the main story of the life of the five Pāṇḍava brothers and their friend and guide, Kṛṣṇa is concerned, earnest efforts were made to present a consistent account, though we can not say that such attempts always proved successful. An excellent illustration of this point can be cited from an endeavour to reconstruct the chronological background of the life of

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98 *Critical studies in the Mahābhārata* (Sukthankar Memorial Edition) Vol. I. p. 333.

Kṛṣṇa on the basis of the *Mahābhārata* supplemented by the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*. First of all let us try to have a picture of the political condition of the Yādavas on the eve of the *Rājasūya* ceremony. The Yādava King Bhīma, the contemporary of Rāma of Ayodhyā, was the same as Sātvata of the *Purāṇas*.[99] His eldest son Andhaka called the great Bhoja, and his descendants reigned in Mathurā before their migration to Dvārakā under the leadership of Kṛṣṇa. Another son of Bhīma Sātvata, named Devavṛdha and his lineage had their capital at Mṛttikāvatī, a town in the upper region of the Narmada southward of Vatsabhūmi.[100] They were specially called the Bhojas. The third son Vṛṣṇi appears to have set up a dynasty in Gujrat. Besides these there were other Yādava kingdoms at Avantī, Daśārṇa, Vidarbha and Māhiṣmatī.

The chief obstacle to the performance of the *Rājasūya* by Yudhiṣṭhira was Jarāsandha, who had established his supremacy over the kings in eastern India, Madhyadeśa and central India. The Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis had been brought under his influence through matrimonial alliance with Kaṁsa. With the death of Kaṁsa he lost his influence over them. His wrath, therefore, fell on Kṛṣṇa, who considered it prudent to migrate to Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa tried to strengthen the Andhakas by marriage alliance with Bhīṣmaka, the ruler of the Bhojas at Bhojakaṭa. He married Rukmiṇī indeed but that could not detach Bhīṣmaka from Jarāsandha's orbit. When Jarāsandha was killed Bhīṣmaka became friendly to the Pāṇḍavas. But Kṛṣṇa could not secure the alliances of all the Yādava clans for the Pāṇḍavas at the Bhārata War. Kṛtavarman Hārdikya, leader of the

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99 *HV.* I. 37, *Vāyu*, 95. 45-47 ; *Liṅga*, I. 68. 47-49.

100 Pargiter : *J. R. A. S.*, 1914, p 287.

Bhojas, Andhakas and Kukuras, joined Duryōdhana[101] probably on account of the old hostility with Kṛṣṇa for the hands of Satyabhāmā and the possession of Syamantaka gem.[102] Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti also joined the camp of the Kauravas each with an *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers.[103] According to the *Bhāgavata* Kṛṣṇa had married their sister Mitravindā against their wishes[104]. Nīla, the King of Māhiṣmatī was also a Yādava, who joined Duryōdhana.[105]

The *Mahābhārata* describes at many places that Kṛṣṇa was friendly to Arjuna but he saluted his two elder brothers on meeting them. This implies that he was of the same age as Arjuna.[106] According to the *Mahābhārata* his sons Pradyumna and Sāmba were present at the time of the *Svayamvara* of Draupadī.[107] But Pradyumna was not born soon after his marriage with Rukmiṇī. Kṛṣṇa is described to have performed austerities for twelve years in order to have his eldest son.[108] If we assume that Kṛṣṇa married Rukmiṇī at the age of 16, Pradyumna could not have been born before the twenty-eighth year of Kṛṣṇa. Pradyumna similarly may be assumed to have killed Samvara and married his wife Māyāvatī at the age of 16. Twelve years after the return of Pradyumna to Dvārakā, Jāmbavatī requested Kṛṣṇa to grant her son after pleasing Śiva by austerities.[109] Kṛṣṇa agreed and in the course of time Sāmba was born. Sāmba could not have attended the *Svayamvara Sabhā* of

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101 *Mbh.* V. 19. 17 ; V. 56. 21. He is called an Ati-ratha, a great hero, in V. 162. 24.

102 *Harivaṁśa*, I. 39. ; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13.

103 *Mbh.* VI. 19. 24.

104 *Bhāgavata*, X. 58. 30-31.

105 *Mbh.* V. 19. 23.

106 *Mbh.* I. 221. 40, II. 21, III. 45.

107 *Mbh.* I. 177. 13.

108 *Mbh.* XIII. 14. 16.

109 *Mbh.* XIII. 14. 12.

Draupadī before the age of twelve. Thus Kṛṣṇa, according to the account of the *Mahābhārata* itself, must have been 28+16+12+12=64 years old when Arjuna, who is presumed to be of the same age as Kṛṣṇa, married Draupadī. The absurdity is carried still further when we try to calculate the age of Arjuna at the time of his marriage with Subhadrā. If Arjuna is 68 at the time of his marriage with Draupadī, he must be over eighty years of age when he married Śubhadrā, because this incident took place when Arjuna had to live in exile for twelve years for a particular transgression. He must then be over 94 years of age at the time of the Bhārata War. But this is simply impossible, because Droṇa, his teacher, was 85 at that time.

At the time of the negotiations for peaceful settlement after the return of the Pāṇḍavas from the thirteen years of exile Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are described by Sañjaya as *taruṇa* young. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra said on the eve of the War that Arjuna had satisfied Agni at the Khāṇḍava forest thirty-three years ago.[110] At that time Arjuna must have been at least 33 years of age. A man of 66 is never referred to as *taruṇa*. But more incredible is the description of Arjuna and Draupadī as young man (*Yuvā*) and middle aged lady (*Madhyama-Vayaḥ*) respectively fifteen years after the Bhārata War.[110(a)] Had the epic been written by a single person these mistakes would not have occurred.

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110 The passage is interpreted by Nilakaṇṭha in the sense quoted above. But Arjuna Miśra, who preceded Nilakaṇṭha says that it means that Arjuna was 33 years old when the Khāṇḍava forest was burnt down. Haridas Siddhantavagisa says that the verse does not indicate time at all; it merely refers to 33 gods. But Dr. S. K. De the editor of the *Udyogaparvan* rightly points out that all the old commentators have taken this verse as indicative of time.

110(a) *Mbh.* XV. 32. 7, 9. This is the description given by Sañjaya to the sages when Arjuna went to the forest to pay a visit to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Another example of chronological confusion has been noticed hy Hopkins. He says that Arjuna must have been at least 29 at the time of the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest ; add to it 12 years of exile and one year of living *incognito*. He would be forty-odd years old when he says that he has carried the Gāṇḍīva bow for sixty five years.[111] Nīlakaṇṭha refers to the views of an earlier commentator who held that these 65 years covered a period earlier as well as later than the time of the *Uttara Go-gṛha* battle when the verse was recited. Nīlakaṇṭha objects to this interpretation on the ground that it would have been impossible for Arjuna to know how long the Gāṇḍīva would be with him in future. He, therefore, holds that the term *varṣa* means six months because monsoon breaks up twice a year and 65 is really equal to 32 years and 6 months. Haridas Siddhantavagisa interprets the words *pañca-ṣaṣṭi varṣāṇī*, as 5 years plus sixty seasons, that is, ten years totalling 15 years in all. If the verse is taken merely as an old saying, put in the mouth of Arjuna, all these difficulties would vanish.

The attempt to form a clear notion of the age of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna at the time of the Bhārata War is not a new one. Such attempts were made in the sixteenth century and also probably hundreds of years before that.

Certain verses have been included as genuine in the Kumbhakonam edition, Nirṇayasāgar Press edition as well as the edition of Haridas Siddhantavagisa[112], but have been discarded as apocryphal in the critical edition. They purport to say that the five Pāṇḍava brothers went to

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111 Hopkins : *The Great Epic of India*, p. 383 foot-note.

112 *Mbh.* I. 117. 8-15 (Haridas Siddhantavagisa edition.)

Hastin-nagar when Yudhiṣṭhira was 16, Bhīma 15, Arjuna 14 and Nakula-Sahadeva 13 years of age. They spent there thirteen years under the guardianship of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Then they lived for six months at Vāraṇāvata, another six months at Ekchakrāpurī and one year in the city of Drupada. They returned with Draupadī to Hastināpur, lived there for 5 years and then stayed at Indraprastha for 22 years. Yudhiṣṭhira, according to this account, was 59 years of age when he performed the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. He along with his brothers spent the next 12 years in the forest and one year *incognito* and then reigned for 36 years, after which he travelled for six months and died at the age of 108. The Deccan recension of the *Mahābhārata* states that Kṛṣṇa was older than Arjuna by three months only.

If we accept those verses as genuine, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna would be about seventy years of age at the time of the Bhārata War. But many of the descriptions of the *Mahābhārata* would then become unreal and fantastic. First, they would not have been described as *taruṇa* by Sañjaya. Secondly, Arjuna has been described as a *yuvaka* when he was appointed as the teacher of dancing and music for Uttarā by King Virāṭa. When the identity of Arjuna was disclosed Virāṭa would not have proposed to give his daughter to Arjuna in marriage, if he had really been a man of seventy. Thirdly, according to these verses the dice-play took place twentynine years after the marriage of Draupadī. She must have been at least sixteen years of age when at the *svayamvara-sabhā* all the princes became enchanted with her youthful beauty. When she went to the palace of Virāṭa she should have been fiftyseven (16 + 29 + 12 years of forest life). Sudeṣṇā the queen of Virāṭa would not have cared to keep Draupadī off from the eyes of her husband, nor would her brother

Kīcaka have been enamoured of her if she had been really fiftyseven years of age. Fourthly, these verses say that the Pāṇḍavas lived in the house of lac for six months, whereas the *Ādiparva* relates that they resided there for full one year. Fifthly, the Bhārata War did not start thirteen years after the dice-play but fourteen years afterwards, because when Kṛṣṇa went to Hastināpur with the proposal for peace Kuntī regretted that she had not seen Draupadī for the last fourteen years. This shows that nearly a year must have elapsed in negotiations for peace after the twelve years of exile and one year of residence *incognito* in the Matsya-rājya.

If Kṛṣṇa was not seventy years of age at the time of the battle of Kurukṣetra, what was his age at that time? Girindrasekhar Basu holds the Kṛṣṇa was 42 years old at that time.[113] If this be true his age would have been 28 at the time of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. But Kṛṣṇa's grandson, Aniruddha is described as having attended the *Rājasūya* ceremony.[114] A man of 28 could not have got a grandson old enough to come from Dvārakā to Indraprastha. Jīva Gosvāmin wrote in 1592 that Yudhiṣṭhira finally secured the kingdom at the age of sixty.[115] He further stated that Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa were junior to Yudhiṣṭhira by three years. He did not, of course, cite any references. But this seems to be a plausible account. The controversial verses referred to above state that Bhīma was junior to Yudhiṣṭhira by one year and Arjuna by two years. But the *Mahābhārata* relates how at the suggestion of her husband Kuntī observed an auspicious *vrata* for one year after the birth of Bhīma and Pāṇḍu

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113 Girindrasekhar Basu : *Purāṇa Praveśa.*

114 *Mbh.* II. 31. 15.

115 *Gopālaçampū, uttara çampū* XXIX. 30.

too practised austerities during that period.[116] Indra became pleased at their conduct and gave them a boon to the effect that they would be blessed with a son endowed with all the good qualities. This makes the difference in age between Bhīma and Arjuna two years and between Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna three years. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna then would both be 57 years of age at the time of the Bhārata War according to Jīva Gosvāmin. We may substantiate this statement by the following hypotheses. Kṛṣṇa was a precocious young man. If he married Rukmiṇī when he was fifteen years of age, his son Pradyumna was born when he was 16, then Kṛṣṇa became a grandfather at the age of 32. It was not impossible for Aniruddha to attend the *Rājasūya* ceremony when he was eleven years of age. Kṛṣṇa was then 43. The Bhārata War broke out fourteen years afterwards (12 years of exile, 1 year of *incognito* and one year of negotiation) when both Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were fiftyseven years old. Was it impossible for extraordinary persons like Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna to maintain a youthful look at the age of 57 ? In this calculation the verses regarding the birth of Pradyumna and Sāmba in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* have been taken as interpolations.

How long did Kṛṣṇa live after the Bhārata War ? We get a definite answer to this at least at three places in the *Mahābhārata*. First, Gāndhārī cursed Kṛṣṇa that he too would die a miserable death, bereft of all his sons, relatives and counsellors when the thirtysixth year would arrive.[117] Again, in the *Mauṣalaparvan* it is stated that when the thirtysixth year after the Kurukṣetra War arrived serious symptoms of immorality were manifested amongst

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116 *Mbh.* I. 114. 11, 22.
117 *Ibid.* XI. 25. 44.

the Yadus and they took to killing one another.[118] Again, it is related that when the thirtysixth year appeared Kṛṣṇa ordered the pilgrimage to Prabhāsa as if to fulfil the curse of Gāndhārī.[119]

If the above account be accepted as true, Kṛṣṇa's span of life covered 93 (57 + 36) years and not 105 or 106 as stated in the apocryphal verses. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that Kṛṣṇa lived in this world for more than 100 years. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* goes even further when it records that Brahmā reminded Kṛṣṇa that it was high time for him to wind up his *līlā* because he had appeared in this world 125 years ago. It is difficult to reconcile this statement with that of the *Mahābhārata*.

Western scholars regard both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* as epics ; but in Indian literature the former is considered *Itihāsa* while the latter is called *Kāvya*. At the very beginning of the *Mahābhārata* the sages request Sauti to relate to them the history of India (*Bhāratasya Itihāsa*).[120] The derivative meaning of the term *Itihāsa* is *iti ha āsa* so in truth it was. But it is not easy to find out from the current *Mahābhārata* what is the truth about the age of Kṛṣṇa.

The *Maitreyī Upaniṣad* states that *Ṛk*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, *Atharvaveda*, *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*—all these are the breath of the all-pervasive Brahmā.[121] Thus according to Indian cultural tradition the *Purāṇa* is as worthy of respectful hearing as the *Vedas* and *Itihāsa*. The term *Purāṇa* occurs in a generic sense in the *Atharvaveda*,[122] *Śatapatha*

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118 *Ibid.* XVI. 1. 16.

119 *Ibid.* XVI. 3. 20.

120 *Ibid.* I. 1. 17.

121 *Maitreyi Upaniṣad*, VI. 3.

122 *Atharvaveda*, XI. 7. 24.
ऋचः सामानि छन्दांसि पुराणं यजुषा सह

Brāhmaṇa,[123] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,[124] and *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*.[125] The evidence of *Purāṇas* can not be brushed aside as legend, which term has been defined as an unauthentic story handed down by tradition and popularly regarded as historical. If there have been additions and modifications on a large scale in the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata* cannot be said to have been immune from these. The relative value of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* as sources of ancient Indian historical tradition is discussed in the Appendix.

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123 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII. 4.3.13.
पुराणं वेदः सोऽयम् इति किंचित पुराणम् आचक्षीत

124 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* II. 4. 10.
इतिहासः पुराणं

125 *Chhāndogya Up.* VII. 1. 1.
इतिहासपुराणं पंचमं वेदानां वेदम्

Appendix I

KṚṢṆA IN THE *BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ*

In the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* Chapters XXIII to XL of the Bhīṣmaparvan constitute the *Bhagavad Gītā.** The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has prepared the text of the *B.G.* by collecting the readings from sixty manuscripts written in the Sāradā, Devanāgarī, Bengali, Telugu, Grantha and Malayalam scripts. These manuscripts as well as 160 others available to the editors for consultation reveal that the variants in the reading of the *B.G.* are much less important both quantitatively and qualitatively than those in the other portions of the *Mahābhārata.* In a few Mss. are found some additional verses, which being added make 19 additional stanzas and 10 half-stanzas, including the 14 additional stanzas and 4 half-stanzas discovered by F. Otto Schrader in the Kashmirian Recensions. Belvalkar has ably proved that most of these additions are admittedly repetitions and doctrinally insignificant. From the time of Śaṅkarācārya down to our own days the *B.G.* has been regarded as consisting of seven hundred stanzas. Every school of Vedāntic thought was required to justify its interpretation with reference to the three canons (*Prasthānatraya*), namely the *B. G.*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahmasūtra.* Like the hymns of the *Vedas* the *Gītā* acquired special sanctity among the seekers of spiritual truth and it came to be recited daily by thousands of them throughout the length and breadth of India. It was, therefore, not at all easy to interpolate some verses in the *B.G.* Had interpolation been introduced on a large

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* abbreviated as *B.G.*

scale, as is supposed by many of the Indologists, the process would not have suddenly stopped with the advent of *Ācārya* Śaṅkara. The readings accepted by Śaṅkara are substantially the same as those of the critical edition published in 1945 and also of the text presented by Dr. Radhakrishnan in 1948.

Indologists like Garbe, Holzmann and Hopkins have accepted the interpolation theory propounded by Weber in 1863.[1] Weber put forward the ingenious theory that several pieces which are in part of highly different character have been put together in the *B.G.* Garbe held that the *B.G.* was originally a *Sāṁkhya-Yoga* treatise but it was later on worked into its present form by some follower of Vedānta. He also believed that there were many contradictory statements in the *Gītā* and these were palpable evidences of interpolation. In 1895 Hopkins wrote with biting sarcasm : "The same thing is said over and over again, and the contradictions in phraseology and in meaning are as numerous as the repetitions, so that one is not surprised to find it described as "the wonderful song, which causes the hair to stand on end. The different meanings given to the same words are indicative of its patchwork origin, which again would help to explain its philosophical inconsistencies."[2] In 1952 Franklin Edgerton regarded it as a dramatic absurdity that the long talks on philosophy and mystic experience should go on while the two armies stood drawn up in battle array. He further wrote : "It is likely that the *Bhagavad Gītā* was not a part of the original epic narrative. Possibly it was composed, or inserted in its present position, by a later interpolation."[3] Let us examine the validity of these statements.

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1 Weber—*Indische Studien*, II, p. 394.
2 Hopkins—*The Religions of India*, p. 400.
3 F. Edgerton—*The Bhagav .d Gītā*, II. pp. 3-4.

No student of history believes that the *Mahābhārata* was written immediately after the Bhārata War. Even an orthodox scholar like Bal Gangadhar Tilak says that the epic must have been written some five hundred years after the War. Many modern scholars are of opinion that the *Adiparvan*, and the last seven *parvas*, containing mostly didactic matters were added to the original epic later on. The *Bhīṣmaparvan* is generally considered as a part of the older *Bhārata* poem. If the writer of the *Bhīṣmaparvan* had been a newspaper reporter we could have taken the philosophical dialogues of the *Gītā* as a dramatic absurdity. But it was composed most likely in the serene atmosphere of a hermitage several hundred years after the war. The writer, therefore, could afford to build up a philosophy of life, in the background of the war which he was going to describe. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his commentary on the first stanza of the *Gītā* quotes *Jāvāla Śruti* and the *Śatapatha Śruti* to show that the field of Kurukṣetra was productive of religious merit. Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have not explained the significance of the battle, but Dr. Radhakrishnan points out that the distress of Arjuna on the eve of the War "is a dramatization of a perpetually recurring predicament."[4] Had the *B.G.* been a later interpolation it could not have been referred to in the *Mahābhārata* itself as many as seven times - three times in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Śāntiparvan*, once in connection with the *Anugītā* section of the *Aśvamedhaparvan* and thrice in the *Ādiparvan*.[5] In 1882 K. T. Telang showed that the text of the *B.G.* was preserved with religious care and that it escaped the hands of interpolators. Tilak practically arrived at the same conclusion. A Western scholar of the standing of

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4 Radhakrishnan—*The Bhagavadgītā*, I. 47.

5 *Mbh.* XII. 336. 36 ; XII. 336. 48-49.

Wilhelm von Humboldt endorses the same view and states : "There appears to me nothing to be present in the whole poem, which stands really in contradiction with one another."

According to Otto the original *Gītā* consisted of only those 128 verses, which refer to the War.[6] Had this been the case the *B.G.* would have shared the fate of numerous war poems. No one would have cared to tag on to it such a poem of great spiritual significance.

Western scholars see in the *B.G.* contradictions relating to Theism and Pantheism, to *Sāṁkhya* and *Vedānta*, to *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* and many other things. But Indian scholars accustomed to the thoughts of the *Upaniṣad* find no difficulty in reconciling the Transcendence and Immanence of God as preached in the *B.G.* Dr. Radhakrishnan has shown how the different elements which, at the period of its composition were competing with one another, were integrated into a comprehensive synthesis. He further elucidates this idea by saying that the teacher in the *B.G.* "refines and reconciles the different currents of thought, the Vedic cult of sacrifice, the *Upaniṣad* teaching of the transcendent Brahman, the Bhāgavata theism and tender piety, the Sāṁkhya dualism and the Yoga meditation. He draws all these living elements of Hindu life and thought into an organic unity. He adopts the method, not of denial, but of penetration and shows how these different lines of thought converge towards the same end."[7] Garbe found a contradiction between *B.G.* VII. 17 and XII. 13 speaking of His special love for some people on the one hand and IX. 29 on the other professing equal regard

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6 Otto—*The Original Gītā* ; 47 verses in I, 24 in II, 10 in X, 42 in XI, and 7 in XVIII.

7 S. Radhakrishnan—*The Bhagavadgītā*, pp. 13-14.

for all and showing no special love or hatred to any. In his commentary on the latter verse Madhusūdana Sarasvatī shows that there is really no contradiction with the former. He says that the sun shines everywhere, but it becomes reflected only in a clear mirror and not in an opaque earthen vessel. From this one can not conclude that the sun loves the mirror and hates the earthen plate. Similarly God has got equal regard for all beings, and yet He reveals Himself in the pure heart of the worshipper while he remains unknown to the unholy mind of the unbelievers. Some of the Western Indologists failed to grasp the significance of the teachings of the *B.G.* and therefore, they had to explain the apparent contradictions by imagining repeated interpolations on a large scale.

Some orthodox scholars believe that the *B.G.* was composed at the time of the Bhārata War, which, according to them took place, as the *Mahābhārata* itself says at the end of the Dvāpara and the beginning of the Kali age.[8] Following the lead of Āryabhaṭ and Bhāskarācārya they put this date at 3102 B. C. But the archaeological and literary evidences go against this. The Harappan culture prevailed in Northern and Western India till the sixteenth or seventeenth century B. C. The Vedic culture could not have been diffused before this time. There is considerable difference between the language of the *B.G.* and the early *Upaniṣads*, not to speak of the hymns of the *Vedas*. J. S. Karandikar argued that the Bhārata War must have taken place in 1922 B. C., because the Bārhadratha dynasty ruled for 1000 years, the Prodyota dynasty for 138 years, the Śaiśunāgas for 362 years and the Nandas for 100 years and then Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne in

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8 *Mbh.* VI. 62 39.

322 B. C.[9] But Dr. K. L. Daftari pointed out that the total number of kings who are said to have ruled for 1500 years was 37 according to the *Vāyu*, *Viṣṇu*, *Matsya* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and the average length of their reign would be more than 41.5 years but it could not have exceeded 20 years.[10] On astronomical grounds too he held that the Bhārata War must have occured in 1197 B. C. But other scholars like P. C. Sengupta doubted the validity of his contention on astronomical grounds again.[11] The average of 20 years is also considered too high by historians. In any case, internal evidence of the *B.G.* shows that it is not a *verbatim* report of the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. It must have been composed long after the War and was meant for study as Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna : "And he who studies this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I would be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge, so I hold. And the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing even he, being liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous."[12]

If the orthodox people believe that the *B.G.* is more than 5000 years old, some Christian scholars, and especially the Christian missionaries like Farquhar hold that the *B.G.* in its present form was written after the Christian era.[13] In 1869 F. Lorinser asserted that the *B.G.* was written by one who was acquainted with, and influenced by the New Testament. K. T. Telang adduced excellent arguments in 1882 to prove the worthlessness of Lorinser's hypothesis. In the same year, however, John Davies wrote

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9 *Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*, 1943-44, p 479.
10 *Ibid.* p. 481.
11 *Ibid.* p. 495.
12 *B.G.* XVIII. 70-71.
13 Farquhar : *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, p. 389

the question of the acquaintance of the author of the *B.G.* with Christian doctrines "is still subjudice", but he had no doubt in his mind that the *B.G.* "can not probably be referred to an earlier period than the third century A. D." In 1905 Richard Garbe propounded the theory in his *Die Bhagavadgītā* that the original *Gītā* was composed in the period between 200 and 150 B. C. as a work of Sāṁkhya-Yoga philosophy, and that it was put in the present form by some Vedāntin in the second century A. D. In the same year Hopkins criticised this theory severely in an article.[14] But three years later he stigmatized the *B.G.* as "an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions."[15] But W. Douglas P. Hill rightly states that Hopkins misunderstood the teaching of the *Gītā*, which is less a medley than a reconciliation of beliefs. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta also has proved that "the *Gītā* is neither an ordinary Sāṁkhya nor a Vedānta work, but represents some older system wherein the views of an earlier school of Sāṁkhya are mixed up with Vedāntic ideas different from the Vedānta as interpreted by Śaṅkara. The arbitrary and dogmatic assertion of Garbe, that he could clearly separate the original part of the *Gītā* from the later additions, need not, to my mind, be taken seriously." He also condemns the theory of the Christian influence on the *Gītā* as a mere fancy.[16] Hill also admits that this theory is now "almost universally discredited."[17]

Several scholars, Europeans as well as Indians, hold that the *B.G.* in its present form appeared in the second century B. C. Hill holds that it could not have been

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14 *JRAS*, 1905, pp. 384-389.
15 Hopkins - *Religions of India*, p. 399.
16 Dasgupta - *History of Indian Philosophy*, II. p. 550.
17 Hill - *op. cit.* p. 276.

composed later than 150 B. C.[18] Prabodh Chandra Sen supported this view by an ingenious interpretation of the history of India. According to him the *B.G.* represents the reaction to the non-violent policy adopted by Aśoka after the Kalinga War. As the *Bherīghoṣa* or the beating of war drums was replaced by the *Dhammaghoṣa* preaching of the law of piety Indians became emasculated and consequently were defeated by the Greeks and other foreign peoples. When Brahmanism was revived under the Śuṅga rulers *B.G.* was written to rouse the martial spirit of the people. Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna to take to fighting is really an appeal to the Indian people to give up the cowardly policy of non-violence: "Yield not to cowardice, O son of Pṛthā; it becomes thee not; cast off poor impotence of heart and rise O slayer of enemies" (II. 3). Sen sees a pun in the words '*buddhau śaraṇam anviccha*' (II. 49) seek refuge in *Buddhi* or discernment and not in Buddha.[19]

All these are highly interesting indeed, but the *B.G.* can not be as late as the middle of the second century B. C. Patañjali flourished at that time, because he wrote around *arunad Yavanaḥ Sāketam*, (a *yavana* or Greek invaded the city of Sāketa), to illustrate the use of a past event which was not actually witnessed by a person, but could have been seen by him. He refers to the four *Vyūhas* of Janārdana, the name by which Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa six times in the *B.G.*[20] But the *Gītā* does not allude to

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18 *Ibid.* p. 18.

19 Prabodh Chandra Sen - *Dharmavijayi Aśoka*, pp. 90-94; *Desh*, Puja Number, 1953, pp. 55-56.

20 *B.G.* I. 35; I. 39; I. 44; III. 1; X. 15 and XI. 51. Patañjali writes in VI. 3. 5—*Janārdana - Sātvatam Chaturtha eva.* S. N. Dasgupta is not right in stating that Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* does not seem to know of the four *Vyūhas* (II. 548)

the *Vyūha* theory directly or indirectly. This indicates that the *B.G.* was earlier than the second century B. C. Saṅkarṣaṇa is mentioned along with Vāsudeva in the Ghosundi inscription of the first century B. C. as well as the Nanaghat inscription ; but his name does not occur in the *B.G.* This is a clear proof of the fact that the *B.G.* must be much earlier than these inscriptions of the first century B. C. Some scholars draw inference also from the absence of the name of Nārāyaṇa in the *Gītā.* But the last section of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* identifies Nārāyaṇa with Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu.[21] Sections seven to nine of this *Araṇyaka* constitute the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* and the tenth section the *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* or Yājñikī *Upaniṣad.* The latter, according to Sāyaṇa, exists in the Drāviḍa, Andhra and Karṇāṭaka recensions. Weber says that the tenth book exists also as an *Atharvōpaniṣad* and insinuates that it is a late work.[22] It is supposed to belong to the third century B. C. But Buhler asserts : "The ancient Bhāgavata, Sātvata or Pañca-rātra sect, devoted to the worship of Nārāyaṇa and his deified teacher Kṛṣṇa Devakī-putra dates from a period long anterior to the rise of the Jainas in the eighth century B. C."[23]

References to the *Vyūha* theory and to Nārāyaṇa abound in the *Mahābhārata.* In the *Bhīṣmaparvan* itself we find after twenty chapters from the end of the *B.G.* section. Brahmā stating that he was born of Aniruddha, Aniruddha of Pradyumna, and Pradyumna and Saṅkarṣaṇa of Kṛṣṇa.[24] In the next chapter Nārāyaṇa is spoken of along with

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21 *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* X. 1. 6 mentions the following *mantra-Nārāyaṇa iramahe Vāsudevāya Dhīmahi tan no viṣṇuḥ pracōdayāt*

22 Weber—*History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 94.

23 *Indian Antiquary*, 1894.

24 *Mbh.* VI. 61. 65-66.

Nara and they are identified with Govinda and Dhanañjaya.[25] All these have led scholars like Dahlmann, S. N. Dasgupta and S. C. Roy to believe that the *B.G.* was composed earlier than the *Mahābhārata* and that it was inserted in the Epic later on with certain additions. Thus Dasgupta states : "The Gītā may have been a work of the Bhāgavata school written long before the composition of the *Mahābhārata*, and may have been written on the basis of the Bhārata legend, on which the *Mahābhārata* was based. It is not improbable that the Gītā, which summarized the older teachings of the Bhāgavata school, was incorporated into the Mahā-Bhārata, during one of its revisions, by reason of the sacredness that it had attained at the time."[26] S. C. Roy is more positive in his assertion. He holds that some eighty verses referring to the Bhārata War were added at the time of inserting the old *Gītā*, originally containing mystical and philosophical teachings,[27] only to the *Mahābhārata*. He is definitely of the view that the *B.G.* is pre-Buddhistic. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta too holds that the *Gītā* does not contain the slightest reference to anything Buddhistic and as such he suggests that it is pre-Buddhistic.

There are two difficulties in ascribing the *B.G.* to the pre-Buddhistic age. First, that its language is not like that of the early pre-Buddhistic *Upaniṣads*. There are some archaic words in the *B.G.* indeed, but these do not

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25 *Ibid.* VI. 62. 11 and 31.

26 S. N. Dasgupta—*History of Indian Philosophy*, II. p. 552.

27 S. C. Roy—*The Bhagavadgitā and Modern scholarship* (Luzac, 1941), p. 148. The following verses, according to him were interpolated : I. 1-46 ; II 1-10, 31-38 ; XI. 26-28, 32-34, 41-42 ; XVIII 59-60, 72-78. No other verse in the *B.G.* contains any reference to the Bhārata War.

necessarily indicate that the poem itself is so very old.[28] Secondly, there occurs in the *B.G.* (XIII. 4) the following words :

Brahma-sūtra-padaiścaiva
hetumadbhiḥ viniścitaiḥ.

which means that this has been sung by sages in many ways and distinctly in various hymns, and also in well-reasoned and conclusive expressions of the *Brahma Sūtra.* If the latter means here the famous *Brahma Sūtra* of Bādarāyāṇa, the *B.G.* must be post-Buddhist, because the *Sūtras* 18-32 of the second section of the second chapter of the *Brahma Sūtra* refute the Buddhistic theory of momentarism and nihilism. But Ācārya Śaṅkara does not interpret the *Brahma Sūtra* here as the book of aphorisms.[29] He takes it as referring generally to 'passages treating of Brahman and quotes *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I. 4. 7. Ānandagiri who belongs to his school, however, definitely mentions the aphorisms beginning with the words *Athāto Brahma-jijñāsā.* Rāmānuja refers to the *Śārīraka sūtras* and states that the sixteen *sūtras* following II. 3. 1. determines the nature of *Kṣetra* and II. 3. 18 to 41 the *Kṣetrajña.* But Weber who usually is eager to ascribe a late date to old scriptures, in this particular case states that the word *Brahma-sūtra* in the *B.G.* "may be taken as an appellative rather than as a proper name."[30] Hill, too, believes that the *Brahma Sūtras*, in their final form were probably written later than the *Gītā* ; and that in this

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28 V. K. Rajwade's article on the *B.G.* in the *R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume*, pp. 325-338.

29 Śaṅkara's Commentary on the *B.G.*, XIII. 4, where he explains the word as *Brahmanaḥ Sūchakāni Vākyāni Brahmasūtrāṇi.*

30 Weber—*History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 242 f. n.

case it includes Upaniṣadic passages and verses current in the Vedāntic schools. Dr. Radhakrishnan upholds this view when in his commentary on the *B.G.* he writes ; "The *Gītā* suggests that it is expounding the truths already contained in the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma Sūtra* or the aphorisms of Brahman, later systematized by Bādarāyaṇa."[31]

Dr. S. N. Dasgupta suggests that the verse might be an interpolation. But there is no evidence for such interpolation. If there is any portion of the *Mahābhārata* which has been comparatively free from the hands of interpolators, it is the *B.G.* When the *Gītā* refers not only to the *Brahma Sūtra* specifically but also to the Vedānta (XV. 15) generally, it is difficult to treat the *Brahma Sūtra* as a mere appellative name.[32]

R. G. Bhandarkar argues that since the *B.G.* contains no mention of the *Vyūhas* it is much earlier than the inscriptions referring to Vāsudeva-Saṅkarṣaṇa, to the Buddhist Niddesa and Patañjali. His conclusion is that "it was composed not later than the beginning of the fourth century before the Christian era. How much earlier it is difficult to say." We agree with this view. But we beg to differ from him when he asserts : "When the *Gītā* was composed, the identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa had not taken place, nor had his being an incarnation of Viṣṇu come to be acknowledged."[33] He tries to explain away the fact that Arjuna twice (XI. 24 and 30) addressed Kṛṣṇa as Viṣṇu by saying that "here Viṣṇu is alluded to as the

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31 Radhakrishnan—*The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 303.

32 John Davies—*Hindu Philosophy* rejects *B.G.* XV. 15 as an interpolation. Rāmānuja explains the word Vedānta as the fruit of the Vedas.

33 R. G. Bhandarkar—*Vaisnavism, Saivism* etc. p. 18.

chief of the Ādityas and not as the supreme being, and Vāsudeva was Viṣṇu in this sense, as mentioned in Chapter 10, because the best thing of a group or class is represented to be his *Vibhūti* or special manifestation"[34] But he overlooks *B.G.* XI. 46 where Arjuna requests Kṛṣṇa to assume His four-armed shape as before—

Icchāmi tvāṁ drasṭuṁ ahaṁ tathaiva |
tenaiva rūpeṇa caturbhujena
Sahasrabāhō bhava Viśvamūrte ||.

Dr. Radhakrishnan explains this verse thus: "Arjuna is asking Kṛṣṇa to assume the shape of Viṣṇu of whom He is said to be an incarnation." Here there is no reference to the mere effulgence of the Āditya-Viṣṇu. Arjuna beseeches Kṛṣṇa to assume his former or usual form, having four arms and holding the conch, mace and disc. Had there been no complete identification between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu such a request could not have been made. Many eminent Indologists like Hopkins, Keith and Hill do not subscribe to Bhandarkar's theory of differentiating Kṛṣṇa from Vāsudeva. Keith states that it is impossible to justify the separation of Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa as two entities.[35] Referring to *B.G.* XI. 24 and 30 Edgerton states: "Kṛṣṇa is directly addressed as Viṣṇu and I do not believe that Viṣṇu can here mean "the sun."[36(a)]

The word Kṛṣṇa occurs in the *B.G.* five times.[36(b)] He is called Hriṣīkeśa, lord of the senses, five times.[37] He is addressed as Acyuta, Infallible, three times. These

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34 *Ibid.* p. 18.

35 *J.R.A.S.* 1915, pp. 838-841.

36(a) Franklin Edgerton—The *B.G.*, p. 31 f. n.

36(b) B.G. V. 1 ; VI. 37 ; VI. 39 ; XI. 41 ; XVII. 1.

37 *B.G.* I. 21, II. 9, II. 10, XI. 36 and XVIII. 1.

appellations indicate that Kṛṣṇa was identified with the Supreme. Some scholars contend that the Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā is different from the historic or Purāṇic Kṛṣṇa. But in the *B.G.* Kṛṣṇa is called Vārṣṇeya, a descendent of Vṛṣṇi twice[38] and as Yādava once.[39]

R. G. Bhandarkar holds that in the *B.G.* there is no reference to the Cowherd God (Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa) nor to any of the demons whom the cowherd Kṛṣṇa killed in the cow-settlement (Gokula).[40] He explains the term Govinda on the authority of the *Mahābhārata* as one who found the earth (*Gō*) in the waters. Alternatively he suggests that *Govinda* is a later form of the Ṛgvedic word *Gōvid*, which was an epithet of Indra in the sense of 'the finder of the cows'. But he has overlooked the use of the term Keśi-nisūdana in the *B.G.* (XVIII. 1). The demon Keśi was killed in the cowherd-settlement and no one has ever suggested that this incident had taken place elsewhere.

In this connection it is worth noting that Āchārya Śaṅkara invariably identifies Kṛṣṇa with Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu throughout his commentary on the *B.G.* Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in VI. 47— 'Of all Yogins, he who full of faith worships Me, with his inner self abiding in Me, I hold to be the most attuned (to me in Yoga)'. Śaṅkara here interprets the word 'Me' as Vāsudeva. When Kṛṣṇa sums up all his teachings in the three verses[41] of the last chapter of the *B.G.* and shows that work, devotion and wisdom go together, Śaṅkara states that complete self-surrender to me means taking refuge in Vāsudeva by all means.[42] The

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38 *B.G.* I. 41 ; III. 36.
39 *Ibid.* XI. 41
40 R. G. Bhandarkar—*Vaisnavism, Saivism* etc. pp. 49-50
41 *B.G.*, XVIII. 56-58.
42 Śaṅkara's commentary on the *B.G.* XVIII. 56.

whole trend of the *B.G.* is to show that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme God. Even before the Lord's Transfiguration as described in Chapter XI, Arjuna says: "I hold as true, all this that thou sayest to me, O Keśava; neither the Gods nor the demons, O Lord, know thy manifestation. Verily Thou Thyself knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Person; the Source of beings, the Lord of Creatures, the God of gods, the Lord of the world."[43]

Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with sacrifice (*Yajña*). By sacrifice he does not mean simply the ritualistic sacrifice as described in the *Vedas*. These are called simply *dravya-yajña*, in which oblations are offered to the gods. These are not altogether denounced, but their limitations are pointed out. They are usually performed in the expectation of rewards in this as well as in the next world. People who perform the sacrifices for rewards would go to heaven indeed, but when the effect of their religious merit is exhausted, they will fall to earth again.[44(a)] Such sacrifices should be performed not for rewards but as a duty, "abandoning attachment.[44(b)] The higher types of sacrifice are that of asceticism or self-control, or union or communion, of scriptural studies and of knowledge or wisdom."[45] Ritualistic observances are said to be as useful to the Brāhmaṇa who understands as is the use of a pond in a place flooded with water everywhere.[46] This is more clearly explained in the *Śāntiparvan* thus: "Just as one who gets water from the river does not attach importance to a well, so the wise do not attach any importance to ritual action."[47] All these

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43 *B.G.* X. 14-15
44 (a) *Ibid.* 10. 21.
44 (b) *Ibid.* IV. 23.
45 *Ibid.* IV. 26-30.
46 *Ibid.* II. 46
47 *Mbh.* XII. 240. 10

show that when the *B.G.* was being written the age of Vedic ritualism had practically come to an end. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* too condemns sacrifices as yielding transient results.[48] The *B.G.* has got many passages in common with the *Iśa*, *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka* and the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads.*[49] The *B.G.*, therefore, may be taken to be the product of the same age in which these *Upaniṣads* were composed. The *Gṛhya Sūtra* of Baudhāyana (II. 22. 9) quotes, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan[50], the famous verse of the *B.G.*, in which the Lord says : "Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water that offering of love, of the pure of heart, I accept." (IX. 26). All these facts go to show that Kṛṣṇa was worshipped as the Supreme in the period of the composition of the *Iśa*, *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads* and the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.* This period cannot be later than the fourth century B. C. Megasthenes refers to the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva under the name of Herakles by the Surasenas. We have tried to prove that even in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* Kṛṣṇa is addressed as Acyuta, Infallible, the name by which Arjuna called him thrice in the *B.G.*

Śrī Aurobindo also hints at the interpretation. He writes : "The historical Kṛṣṇa, no doubt, existed. We

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48. *Muṇḍaka*, I. 2. 7.
49. *B.G.* XIII. 15 and VI. 29-Īśa 5.
B.G. XIII. 15 - *Muṇḍaka* II. 1. 2.
B.G. V. 13 - *Śvet.* III. 18
B.G. XIII. 14-15 - *Śvet.* III. 16-17.
The parallel passages in the *B.G.* and Kaṭha are :—

B.G.	*Kaṭha*	*B.G.*	*Kaṭha*
II. 19	II.19	III. 42-43	III. 10-11, VI. 7-8
II. 20, VIII. 2	II.18	VIII. 11	II.15
II. 29	II.7	IX. 48,53	II.8-9, 23-24

50 Radhakrishnan—*Indian Philosophy*, I. p. 524.

meet the name first in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* where all we can gather about him is that he was well known in spiritual tradition as a knower of the Brahman, so well known indeed is his personality and the circumstances of his life that it was sufficient to refer to him by the name of the mother as Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī, for all to understand who was meant. In the same *Upaniṣad* we find mention of King Dhṛitarāṣṭra son of Vicitravīrya, and since tradition associated the two together so closely that they are both of them leading personages in the action of *Mahābhārata*, we may fairly conclude that they were actually contemporaries and that the epic is to a great extent dealing with historical characters and in the war of Kurukshetra with a historical occurrence imprinted firmly on the memory of the race."[51] Dr. Radhakrishnan raises an abstruse philosophical question when he asks how can a historical individual be identified with the Supreme God ? His answer is that such identification is familiar to Hindu thought. He further explains as follows : "A liberated soul uses his body as a vehicle for the manifestation of the Eternal. The divinity claimed by Kṛṣṇa is the common reward of all earnest spiritual seekers. He is not a hero who once trod the earth and has now left it, having spoken to His favourite friend and disciple but is everywhere and in every one of us, as ready to speak to us now as He ever was to any one else. He is not a bygone personality, but the indwelling spirit an object for our spiritual consciousness."[52] His explanation will be accepted by Vaiṣṇava devotees if by the 'indwelling spirit,' he means the *Antaryāmin*, who is in our heart and regulates all our activities.

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51 Sri Aurobindo—*Essays on the Gita*, (Arya Publisher, Calcutta, 2nd ed. 1962), pp. 19-20.

52 Radhakrishnan—*The Bhagavadgitā*, pp. 30-31.

The Western Indologists try to trace the process of deification of Kṛṣṇa from a tribal hero to the Supreme God. Hopkins thinks that Kṛṣṇa was not originally represented as a divine being in the *Mahābhārata*; that he was regarded as a demi-God in the period between 400 and 200 B. C., and he became the Supreme God between 200 B. C. and 200 A.D. There is, however, no positive evidence for suggesting such dates. Keith holds that there is no part of the *Mahābhārata* which does not regard Kṛṣṇa as God.

Rama Prasad Chanda propounded a highly ingenious theory about the two phases of the cult of Vāsudevaism—one Brāhmaṇic professed by the orthodox Brāhmaṇic tribes and castes and the other un-Brāhmaṇic, professed by the Ābhīras and the Saurāṣṭras, amongst whom the Yādavas are said to have lived at Mathurā and Dvārakā. "The un-Vedic or the un-Brāhmaṇic Pañcarātra," he wrote, "evidently grew out of the primitive worship of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Vāsudeva and other Vṛṣṇi chiefs such as Vāsudeva's son Pradyumna, and his grandson Aniruddha as hero gods by the barbarian Ābhīras and Saurāṣṭras. The religion of the *Bhagavadgītā* on the other hand, represents the orthodox phase of Vāsudevaism in its fully developed form. If we may assume any basis of fact in the Epic legends and tradition, we must believe that the worship of Vāsudeva as the founder of the religion of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Anu-Gītā* originated among the Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas and Kurus and was handed by them to the Surasenas."[53] The theory, however, suffers from two defects. First, the Pañca-rātra school can not be regarded as a religion of the barbarian Ābhīras and Saurāṣṭras. The Gopas of the Mathurā region can hardly be

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53 R. P. Chanda—*Archaeology and Vaisnava Tradition* (Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 5).

identified with the Ābhīras.[54] Secondly, the traditions recorded in the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas* do not anywhere hint at the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva as God. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* categorically states that the Yādavas were so unfortunate that they could not recognise Kṛṣṇa as God. In the absence of any tradition of the worship of Kṛṣṇa by the Yādavas how can we accept the theory that Kṛṣṇa was at first a tribal God ?[55] It is, however, possible that after the destruction of Dvārakā Vajra, the grandson of Kṛṣṇa having been installed as the King of Indraprastha began the ceremonial worship of Kṛṣṇa in the Mathurā region.[56] The Gopas of Vraja had probably taken the first steps in worshipping Kṛṣṇa as God. Thus the Kṛṣṇa-worship became popular in the Surasena country. This is the reason why Megasthenes found it so popular in that tract. But all these are nothing but surmises. Edgerton is perfectly right when he asserts : "We know nothing of the process by which he (Kṛṣṇa) attained divine honours, nor of his earlier history as a God, before the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which is probably the earliest work presented to us in which he appears as such. In this work he has all the attributes of a full-fledged monothiestic deity, and at the same time, as we shall see the attributes of the Upaniṣadic

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54 Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya—*The Evolution of Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, p. 97.

55 "It is very probable that Vāsudeva was worshipped by the race of the Yādavas as a tribal hero according to their own tribal sects." S. N. Dasgupta—*History of Indian Philosophy*, II, p. 543.

56 *Mbh.* XVI. 7. There is a tradition amongst the Vaiṣṇavas at Vṛndāvana that Vajranābha set up eight images of Kṛṣṇa, four of which were called Devas, namely, Harideva, Baladeva, Keśavadeva and Govindadeva ; two are called Nāthas, namely, Śrīnātha and Gopinātha and two Gopālas, known as Sākṣigopāla and Madangopāla.

Absolute."[57] Kṛṣṇa, thus must have been accepted as the Supreme God positively in the fourth century B. C. and possibly a few centuries earlier, if our interpretation of the passage in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* has got any validity at all.

57 F. Edgerton—*The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 30.

Chapter II

EARLY LIFE OF KṚṢṆA - IN SCULPTURE AND LITERATURE

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that Kṛṣṇa lived in this world for more than one hundred years.[1] According to some verses found in several old manuscripts, and printed in the Nirṇayasāgar and Kumbhakonam editions as well as that compiled by Haridas Siddhantavagisa.[2] Arjuna died at the age of 106 and Kṛṣṇa was senior to him only by three months. We often find in the *Mahābhārata* that Kṛṣṇa used to bow down to Yudhiṣṭhira and embrace Arjuna, because the latter was of the same age as he. The *Bhāgavata* asserts categorically that one day Brahmā reminded Kṛṣṇa that it was high time for the latter to wind up his *līlā* because he had appeared in this world 125 years ago.[3] Thus from all these accounts it appears that Kṛṣṇa died at a ripe old age. According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[4] he spent the first eleven years of his life amidst the cowherds at Vraja, hidden from public eyes. The exploits of these eleven years have fascinated the early Indian sculptors and litterateures much more than his unparalleled heroism and matchless diplomacy of the later period. While there are hundreds of bas reliefs and terracotta figures illustrating the various incidents connected with his life at Gōkula and Vṛndāvana there is none depicting his fight with Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla,

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1 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 37. 18
2 *Mbh.* I. 117. 8-15
3 *Bh.* XI. 6. 26
4 *Bh.* III. 2. 26

Dantavakra, Śālva, Naraka, Kāla Yavana, Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva and other enemies of Kṛṣṇa. If we exclude the sculptures illustrating the fighting of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma against Kaṁsa and his wrestlers, Cānūra and Muṣṭika, we find only two incidents of his post-Vṛndāvana life - Pārijātaharaṇa and Kṛṣṇa's reception of his poor class friend Sudāmā depicted on stone. For full one thousand years, extending from the second to the twelfth century A.D., Indian sculptors took delight in engraving on stone the *līlās* of Kṛṣṇa during his early life at Vraja, Gōkula or Vṛndāvana.

Eminent Orientalists, like Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, however, contend that "Kṛṣṇa's boyhood in the Gōkula was unknown till about the beginning of the Christian era."[5] They surmise that the Ābhīras possibly brought with them the name of Christ "and this name probably led to the identification of the boy—God with Vāsudeva—Kṛṣṇa."[6] Bhandarkar had to make two hypotheses in order to substantiate his theory. The first was that the *Ghaṭa Jātaka* is post-Christian, and the second was that the reference made by Śiśupāla at the *Rājasūya* assembly to the early life of Kṛṣṇa at Gōkula are to be considered as interpolations in the *Mahābhārata*. Both these suppositions, however, are contrary to the findings of modern scholars.

The *Ghaṭa Jātaka* definitely establishes the connection of Kṛṣṇa with the cowherds. It relates how through the intervention of Nanda Gopa, Devagabbhā, the daughter of Mahākaṁsa, a king in the city of Asitāñjana, met Upasāgara and married him. There was, however, an old prophecy that a son born of Devagabbhā would destroy the lineage of Kaṁsa, the son of Mahākaṁsa. This is why Kaṁsa wanted to kill the issues of Devagabbhā as soon as they

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5 *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious systems*, p. 36

6 *Ibid.* p. 38.

were to be born. They were, therefore, secretly exchanged with ten daughters of Nandagopā immediately after their birth. In this way the ten sons, Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Chandadeva, Suriyadeva, Agnideva, Varuṇadeva, Arjuna, Pajjuna, Ghaṭa Paṇḍita and Aṁkura were reared up as the progenies of Nandagopā and her husband Andhaka-veṇhu. In course of time they grew strong and heroic and Kaṁsa came to know them as sons of Devagabbhā. He invited them to join a wrestling contest. They accepted the invitation and killed Kaṁsa's wrestlers Cānūra and Muṣṭika. Vāsudeva chopped off the heads of Kaṁsa and his brother Upakaṁsa with a *Chakkam*, wheel, and assumed the sovereignty of the city of Asitāñjana. Vāsudeva captured the city of Dvārāvatī and along with his brothers lived there for a long time and conquered the whole of India. The curse of Kaṇha Dīpāyana brought about the destruction of all except Vāsudeva and Baladeva. In this story Devagabbhā is really Devakī and Nanda Gopā represents Yaśodā. It shows that Kṛṣṇa spent his early years secretly amongst the Gopas. The story is definitely pre-Christian.[7]

The critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, reveals that the verses in which Śiśupāla derisively referred to the killing of Pūtanā[8], turning down the cart[9] and the holding of Govardhana for a week[10] are genuine and not mere interpolations. Moreover Vidura told Duryōdhana and his friends in the *Udyogaparva* that Kṛṣṇa had killed Pūtanā in his boyhood, had held the Govardhana mountain for protecting the cows, and had put Ariṣṭa Dhenuka, the

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7 Faüsboll—*Jātaka*, No. 454.
8 *Mbh*. II. 38. 4.
9 *Mbh*. II. 38. 8.
10 *Mbh*. II. 38. 9.

valiant Cāṇūra and the Aśvarāja apparently signifying Keśī.[11] The verses in which Draupadī is said to have invoked Kṛṣṇa at the time of her disrobing in the *Sabhā-parvan* as *Gopī-jana-priya* or the beloved of the Gopīs, are admitted to be interpolations. There are, however, many other genuine verses in the *Mahābhārata* alluding to some of the incidents in the early life of Kṛṣṇa. Thus Kṛṣṇa is called the killer of Keśī[12] in II. 30. 11, II, 36.2, III. 15.10 and 12.48.10. In many of the manuscripts, such as K_{22}. 4, B.Da, Dn, and D 2 occur after N. 22. 16 of the Poona edition, in course of Arjuna's hymn to the Devī that she is referred to as being born in the family of Nanda Gopa. The Southern recension of the *Mahābhārata*, edited by P. Shastri, contains in the *Sabhāparvan* an extremely lengthy oration of Bhīṣma in course of which Kṛṣṇa's exploits like the breaking of the cart (verse 748), killing of Pūtanā (758), Kṛṣṇa being tied down to the mortar (770), breaking the Arjuna tree (771), his playing in the Bhāṇḍīra forest (805) and his sacrificial worship of Mount Govardhana (830) have been described. The Gītā Press edition has also included these verses.[13] But the critical edition rightly excludes these because they are not found in the majority of old Mss. of northern India. The *Mahābhārata* does not refer any where to the amours of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs indeed, but the references cited above show that the other episodes of Kṛṣṇa's life at Gōkula and Vṛndāvana were certainly known to the poet of the epic.

The Mathura Museum has got a fragmentary relief of the second or third century A. D. depicting Vasudeva with new-born Kṛṣṇa in his hand crossing the Yamunā,

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11 *Mbh.* V. 128. 45-46.

12 *Mbh.* II. 30. 11, II. 36. 2, III. 15. 10 ; XII. 48. 10.

13 *Mbh.* Gitā Press ed., pp. 798-894.

certainly with a view to taking him to the house of Nanda and Yaśōdā.[14] The fullest description of the early life of Kṛṣṇa is to be found in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. But historians are not willing to admit any earlier date for its composition than the eighth or ninth century A.D.[15] The older critics like Colebrooke[16] and Wilson[17] considered it a fabrication made in the twelfth or the thirteenth century, but the definite mention of its name and contents by Alberuni in 1030 A. D. and the discovery of an anthology of 477 stanzas of the *Bhāgavata* entitled *Muktā Phala*, compiled by Vōpadeva and commented upon by Hemādri, the Minister of *Rājā Rāmachandra of Devagiri* in the thirteenth century disposed of that absurd theory. Now some scholars point out that as the *Bhāgavata* extols the holiness of the Drāviḍa land, watered by the Tāmraparṇī, Kṛtamālā, Payasvinī and Kāverī, where many devotees of Hari would be born[18], it must have referred to the Āḷvārs, the most prominent of whom flourished in the ninth century A.D. But the earliest Āḷvārs like Poygai of Kāñcīpuram, Pūdam of Māmallapuram and Pēy of Mylapore, flourished not later than the fifth or the sixth century A. D.[19] More-

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14 *A. S. I. A. R.*, 1925-26, pp. 183-194.

15 Durgashankar Sastri in *Bharatiya Vidyā*, II, pp. 129-139 holds that the *Bhāgavata* could not have been composed before the ninth century. Dr. J. N. Banerjea, *I H Q.* XXVI, 1951, pp. 138-43 considers the tenth century or a little earlier as the period of composition of the *Bhāgavata*. Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri thinks that the *Purāṇa* was composed abuut the beginning of the tenth century (*A History of South India*, P. 332). But B. N. Kṛṣṇamurti Sarma tries to prove that it was composed before the sixth century A. D. (*A B O R I*, X I V, pp. 182-218.)

16 *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. VII, p. 467.

17 H. H. Wilson—*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Preface, p. xxx.

18 *Bh.* XI. 5. 39-40.

19 Nilakanta Sastri—*Development of Religion in South India*, p. 45.

over, the Nānāghāt inscription of about 100 B. C. and the Chinna inscription of Gotamīputra Yajña Sātakarṇī of the second century A. D. clearly prove the existence of the devotees of Vāsudeva in the South in earlier times. The critics further hold that as the *Bhāgavata* refers to the Hūṇas, it must have been composed after their invasion of India in the 5th and 6th centuries A. D. But the term Hūṇa occurs in the *Mahābhārata*[20] and in the *Lalitavistara*[21], which was translated into Chinese in 330 A.D. Gauḍapāda, who is the *parama-guru* of Śaṅkarācārya (788-820 A.D.), has quoted a verse of the *Bhāgavata* (X. 14. 4) in his commentary on the *Uttaragītā*. Gauḍapāda has written his commentary on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* on the model of the *Māṭharavṛtti*, which has quoted two verses of the *Bhāgavata* (I. 6. 35, I. 8. 52).

Some of the sculptures at Mandor, Deogarh and Paharpur also point out an early date for the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The Door-jambs found at Mandor, Māṇḍavyapura, the ancient capital of Marwar, belonging to the fourth or fifth century A. D. and the Paharpur Plate XXXV (d) depict the stealing of butter by Kṛṣṇa. This incident is referred to only in the *Bhāgavata*[22] but not in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. The *Harivaṁśa*[23] states that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma used to do some mischief to the people, which has been interpreted by the 17th century commentator Nīlakaṇṭha as the stealing of butter. The *Padma-Purāṇa*, which extols the *Bhāgavata* as the best of all the *Purāṇas*[24], describes indeed the stealing of butter, but it must have followed the earlier tradition

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20 *Mbh.* VI. 251. 23-24.
21 *Ind. Antiquary*, 1913, p. 266.
22 *Bh.* X. 9. 6.
23 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 7. 10.
24 *Padma P.*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, 193. 3.

of the *Bhāgavata*. The Mandor and the Paharpur sculptures, therefore, might be taken as an indication of the influence of the *Bhāgavata*, or of the existence of a legend from which both have borrowed.

The *Matsya Purāṇa* prescribes the recital of the incident of the release of the elephant from the clutches of its enemy as an antidote for inauspicious dreams.[25] But the incident is not described in the *Matsya Purāṇa* at all. It is fully related only in the *Bhāgavata*[26] and the *Vāmana Purāṇa*.[27] The extant *Vāmana Purāṇa*, according to Dr. Hazra, is not the same as noticed by the *Matsya* and the *Skanda Purāṇa*. He prefers to call it an *Upapurāṇa* and places its date between the ninth and the eleventh century.[28] Some scholars hold that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has been influenced by Śaṅkarāchārya because there is some similarity in the idea as well as the language between the two.[29] But Śaṅkara himself was influenced by Nāgārjuna. All these may warrant the conclusion that the *Matsya Purāṇa* really prescribed the reading of the *Gajendra-mokṣaṇa* incident from the *Bhāgavata*. This is strengthened by the evidence of a magnificent piece of sculpture found in the Deogarh temple of the Gupta period. It cannot be placed later than the seventh

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25 *Matsya P.*, 242. 16.

26 *Bh.* VIII. 2-4.

27 *Vāmana P.*, 85. 22-84.

28 *Puranic Records*, pp. 77-91.

29 *Bhāratiya Vidya*, II, pp. 129-139 and *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1951, pp. 138 ff. Dr. R. C. Hazra points out "these scholars overlook the facts that the present Bhāgavata, like the other Purāṇic works, has been revised and emended on more occasions than one and that Śaṁkarācārya, Magha and others' influence must be due to these revisions and emendations. On the other hand, there are evidences to prove the pre-Śamkara origin of the earlier portion of the present Bhāgavata" (*Studies in Upapuranas*, I., P. 240)

century. It represents an elephant offering lotus to Viṣṇu seated on Garuḍa. This is exactly what the *Bhāgavata* describes.[30] But there is one apparent discrepancy between the sculptural and literary representation. While the *Bhāgavata* relates that the elephant was attacked by an alligator, the sculpture shows that it was bound by the coiled tails possibly of two serpents.[31]

The sculptors sometimes took liberty and do so even now for the sake of producing greater artistic effect. It is related in the *Visnu Purāṇa* that one day Yaśodā tied Kṛṣṇa to the wooden mortar and said to him, "Now, you naughty boy, get away from hence if you can." When she went away about her domestic work, Kṛṣṇa dragged the mortar between two Arjuna trees. He pulled it so hard that they were upturned.[32] The *Harivaṁśa* too narrates a similar story.[33] The *Bhāgavata* for the first time relates that two sons of Kuvera having incurred the displeasure of Nārada had been transformed into the two Arjuna trees and that they were liberated by Kṛṣṇa.[34] No such description is found in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Harivaṁśa*. There are two bas reliefs at Badami, which are assigned to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., illustrating the uprooting of the Yamalārjuna trees with two male figures emanating from them.[35] Then again the excavations at Paharpur have revealed a similar, though much more graceful sculpture, showing Kṛṣṇa standing astride with his feet placed on the

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30 *Bh.* VIII. 3. 32.

31 The Gupta Temple at Deogarh (Memoir Arch. Survey of India, No. 70, P. 13).

32 *Viṣṇu P.*, V. 6.

33 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 7.

34 *Bh.* X. 10.

35 R. D. Banerji—*Memoir, Arch. Survey of India*, No. 25. Cave No. II. Plate XII C(1), and Cave No. III, Plate XXIV, b (4).

heads of two prostrate male beings, who according to the *Bhāgavata*[36] were called Nalakuvera and Manigṛva and not Nala and Kuvera as supposed by K. N. Dikshit.[37] Here the sculptor has depicted not the uprooting of the two trees but breaking their heads, leaving two third of the trunks erect. Kṛṣṇa does not appear here as an infant crawling on his hands and feet but as a boy below ten years of age.[38] Kṛṣṇa is shown here with triple tresses of hair on the head and an elaborate *patra-Kuṇḍala* on his ears. This sculpture belongs to the seventh century according to Dikshit. The bas relief of the Haihayas of Tripuri, belonging to the 11th or 12th century, and now preserved in the palace at Sohagpur, shows the figure of Kṛṣṇa standing in the centre, with a tree on each side, on the top of each of which is a human head. Kṛṣṇa is seen passing an arm around each of these trees.[39] While the Paharpur sculptor placed the two sons of Kuvera at the feet of the trees, the artist here put them at their top.[40] In both the cases the major portions of the trees stand erect. All these, however, show that the *Bhāgavata* version of the Yamalārjuna trees was known to the artists of Badami, Paharpur and Sohagpur, as no where except the *Bhāgavata* do we find any reference to the two accursed sons of Kuvera. If in ascertaining the date of the *Bhāgavata* all the literary and sculptural evidences are taken into account it might not appear unreasonable to hold that the *Purāṇa*

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36 *Bh.* X. 9. 23.

37 *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, Memoir Arch. Survey No. 55, P. 39.

38 *Ibid.* Plate XXVIII (d) 3.

39 R. D. Banerji—*The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments*, P. 101.

40 *Ibid.* Plate XLII(b), Panel 3,

took its present shape near about the sixth century A. D. It may be mentioned in this connection that merely negative evidence like the silence of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on the *Bhāgavata* does not indicate much. Lakṣmīdhara, the Minister of the Gāhaḍavāla King Govinda Chandra, has not quoted any verse from the *Bhāgavata*, but Ballālasena, who was almost his contemporary, makes an explicit statement in his *Dānasāgara* to the effect that he had not quoted the authority of the *Bhāgavata* because it does not treat of *dāna*. Lakṣmīdhara, by the way, does not include Purī as one of the holy places, though there is epigraphic evidence to show that people used to go on pilgrimage to Purī in the tenth century.[41]

The extraordinary incidents connected with the birth of Kṛṣṇa fascinated Indian artists. These have been depicted at many places, including Mathura, Deogarh, Badami, Paharpur, Khajuraho and Sohagpur. The Deogarh sculpture illustrates a lady with mournful appearance handing over a child to a male figure who shows satisfaction because his mission was to save its life.[42] Caves II and III of Badami have got panels showing the birth of Kṛṣṇa.[43] The first scene in Cave II shows a woman lying in bed with a child.[44] She is more likely to be Devakī than Yaśodā, because a number of venerable persons representing probably the gods are seen standing by her. The scene by its right side shows a man with the sacred thread sitting by the side of Yaśodā and Rohinī with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in their laps. R. D. Banerji has not identified the man but he might be Garga

41 *E. I.*, XXXV, p. 174.

42 *The Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, p. 18.

43 R. D. Banerji, *Op. Cit.* Plates XII b, 1 and XXIV, 1 and 2, and C 1 and 2.

44 *Ibid.* Plate XII b, 1.

at the *Nāmakaraṇa* ceremony, described in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[45] and *Bhāgavata*[46] but not referred to in the *Harivaṁśa*. The birth scene in Cave III at Badami has been interpreted by R. D. Banerji as follows : "On this lintel, beginning from the extreme left, we find a house which represents the prison in which Kaṁsa imprisoned his sister Devakī and his brother-in-law Vasudeva. In front of his house, a male is seated on a cushion, with two attendants carrying fly-whisks on each side. This represents Kaṁsa talking to his brother-in-law, Vasudeva, who is seated on three cushions to his right. This part of the bas relief may represent the visit of Kaṁsa to the prison immediately after the birth of Kṛṣṇa, and the former's repentance. To the left of this scene we find another house which represents the same prison out of which two men are walking to the right. In front of them are two trees and a sloping rock. A female figure is rushing down the sloping stone. The scene represents the agents of Kaṁsa carrying away and then killing Kṛṣṇa's elder sister, by dashing her to pieces on a stone—To the left of this is another tree. In the last part of the bas relief we find a man standing with vase in his left hand, and another man standing facing him to his right. A female and a male are standing side by side at the extreme left of the bas relief."[47] It appears that R. D. Banerji has not been able to explain the last scene and has misinterpreted the other scenes. There is no occasion to show trees and a sloping stone in the prison house. The scene refers to incidents at Gokula. No *Purāṇa* states that Kaṁsa appeared in the prison immediately after the birth of Kṛṣṇa, nor do they refer to the killing of Yogamāyā by the

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45 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 6.

46 *Bh.* X. 8.

47 R. D. Banerji—*Op. Cit.* pp. 52-53. Plate XXIV, 1 and 2.

male or female attendants of Kaṁsa. The *Harivaṁśa* states that after having exchanged Kṛṣṇa with the daughter of Yaśodā, Vasudeva himself went to Kaṁsa and informed him about the birth of a daughter.[48] Kaṁsa rushed to the prison and demanded the surrender of the child. At this the women, who were in Devakī's house, bewailed and Devakī herself piteously implored her cousin brother to spare the daughter. She placed the child in front of Kaṁsa, who immediately caught her by the feet and whirling it round dashed her on the stone. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[49] and the *Bhāgavata*[50] relate that Kaṁsa was informed of the birth of the child not by Vasudeva but by the Warders of his prison. Kaṁsa immediately repaired to that place and ignoring the entreaties of his sister dashed the child against a stone. The Badami bas relief XXIV D 1 shows the mother giving a suck to the child and several persons, male and female sitting by her side. She is in all probability Yaśodā attended by her friends and relatives. Many cows are represented by her side and in a scene two groups of persons of both the sexes are making merry. This is really a representation of *Nanda-Mahōtsava* and not Kṛṣṇa's transfer to Gōkul as interpreted by R. D. Banerji. A massive relief showing the newly born Kṛṣṇa lying by the side of Devakī attended by four Chauri-bearers has been found at Pathari, Gwalior. It is assigned to seventh century A. D. The Paharpur Plate XXXV (b) No. 9 shows the watchman in the prison of Kaṁsa falling asleep while standing and leaning on his big club. It is one of the most wonderful carvings on stone, depicting vividly how one may be overcome by sleep while on duty. Plate XXXIII(d) illustrates Devakī

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48 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 4. 28.
49 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 3.
50 *Bh.* X. 4.

handing over the new born Kṛṣṇa to Vasudeva and Plate XXIX(b) shows Vasudeva carrying Kṛṣṇa to the house of Nanda. In the Khajuraho Museum a panel depicts Vasudeva and Devakī in the jail with a sentry standing on guard.[51] The expression on the face of Devakī is extremely sad because her child was to be taken away from her. A little ahead Vasudeva is offering the baby to a lady apparently Yaśodā. The artist has ignored the Paurāṇic tradition here because Yaśodā was unaware of the exchange of her daughter for Vasudeva's son.

The *Harivaṁśa* speaks of the divine form of Kṛṣṇa at the time of his birth.[52] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[53], *Bhāgavata*[54] and *Padma Purāṇa*[55] state that Kṛṣṇa was born with four arms. In the fascinating drama entitled *Bālacaritam* attributed to Bhāsa we find Vasudeva speaking of Viṣṇu appearing on the earth in the form of his son, but there is no allusion to the four hands of the new-born babe. The incident of Devakī handing over the child to Vasudeva as depicted by the sculptors at Deogarh and at Paharpur is not to be found in the *Harivaṁśa*, or, any of the *Purāṇas* ; but is described in the *Bālacaritam*. These and some other evidences make us believe that Keith was right in attributing to this drama, a date, anterior to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata*. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate the importance of this drama as a source of legends relating to the early life of Kṛṣṇa. There is no reference to the prison as the place of birth of Kṛṣṇa in this drama. Vasudeva finds every body asleep at the midnight when

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51 Urmila Agrawal—*Khajuraho—Sculptures and their significance*, Fig. 15.
52 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 4. 24.
53 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 3. 8.
54 *Bh.* X. 3. 9.
55 *Padma Purāṇa*, 245. 36.

the boy is born. He takes him in his lap and bids Devakī to go inside the house.[56] He goes to the gate of the city of Mathurā and crosses the river Yamunā. He finds his old friend Nanda Gopa on the bank of the other side of the river carrying a lifeless daughter. He hands over the son to him. The daughter shows signs of life and Vasudeva takes her to Mathurā. The second Act relates how the daughter was dashed on a stone by Kaṁsa but rose up in the sky and prophesied that she would destroy the lineage of Kaṁsa. The third Act is important for indicating the age of Kṛṣṇa where certain events happened. Thus Pūtanā came to kill him when he was ten days old. A demon came to attack him in the guise of a cart when Kṛṣṇa was one month of age. After several months he began to make mischief like drinking milk or curd at some houses and pilfering butter from some other houses. The milkmaids complained to the wife of Nanda. She put a rope in the middle of his body and tied him up to a wooden morter. Kṛṣṇa dragged it up to two Dānavas named Yamala and Arjuna who became a single body by force of the impact. He then uprooted the trees and the two Dānavas died then and there. Reference is then made to the killing of Pralamba-asura, who appeared before Kṛṣṇa in the guise of Nanda Gopa himself. It was Balarāma who killed Pralamba. Dhenuka is described to have been killed by Dāmodara though the *Purāṇas* attribute the feat to Balarāma.

The most remarkable thing about the *Bālacaritam* is that Kṛṣṇa's dance with the young maids of Nanda-Gokula is referred to as *Hallisaka*.[57] The damsels are described by Dāmodara as white in colour, having faces and eyes

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56 *Bhāsa* : *Bālacaritam*, I. 9.

57 *Ibid*. III. 2.

like lotus, wearing multi-coloured dresses. While dancing, their dressed-up hair, bedecked with flowers, became loose and they held it in their hands. Saṅkarṣaṇa and other cowherd youths joined the dance. There was nothing secret about it. The old cowherds too came to witness it and regretted that they would become tired soon if they tried to join it. Dāmodara called damsels like Ghoṣa-sundarī, Vanamālā, Chandrarekhā and Mṛgākṣi by name. While the group dancing was being performed a demon in the form of a bull named Ariṣṭa came to attack Kṛṣṇa, who, however, killed him forthwith. It is to be noted here that the term *Hallisaka* or *Halīsaka* is to be found only in the *Bharata Nāṭyasūtram* and in the colophon at the end of II. 77 of the *Harivaṁśa*. It does not occur in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* or *Bhāgavata*, which describe the *Rāsa* dancing of a multitude of Gopīs with Kṛṣṇa as the only male member in the party.

According to the *Purāṇas Kāliya-damana* incident precedes the *Rāsa*-dance but the *Bālacaritam* reverses the order. There is a distinct sign of eroticism in the *Kāliya-damana* incident of the drama. The maids are described as having budding breasts. They addressed Kṛṣṇa as Bhaṭṭa and entreated him not to enter the lake of Kāliya. Saṅkarṣaṇa, however, asked them not to be afraid and remarked that they had manifested their love for Kṛṣṇa. While Kṛṣṇa performed the *Hallisaka* dance on the five heads of the serpent, a messenger came from Kaṁsa to fetch him to Mathurā for taking part in the Dhanur-yajña. Akrūra is not mentioned in this connection nor is there any allusion to the wailings of the Gopīs. The fifth and last Act of the drama describes how the two young brothers killed the washerman of Kaṁsa, took scents from the haunch-backed woman, who is called Madanikā here and made her straight, and the way the elephant named Utpalāpīḍa

(in place of Kubalayāpīḍa of the *Purāṇas*) was killed and the sacrificial bow was broken to pieces. Their fight against the wrestlers Chānūra and Muṣṭika is also described with considerable gusto. Dāmodara then went up on the platform, caught hold of the head of Kaṁsa and dropped him down, probably by striking him with a thunderbolt. Some of the Gopas had evidently accompanied the two brothers to Mathurā, because after the death of Kaṁsa they shouted jubilantly that now the royal power would be exercised by the cowherds. The peculiarity of this drama is that from the beginning to the end the two brothers have been called Dāmodara and Saṅkarṣaṇa. Nowhere have they been called Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. It is remarkable that even in Bhāsa's drama called *Dūtavākyam* the name of Kṛṣṇa does not occur. He is called Vāsudeva there. The name of Yaśodā too, is conspicuous by its absence in the *Bālacaritam*. The *Govardhana-dhārana* incident has not been mentioned or referred to anywhere.

There is a big controversy regarding the date of Bhāsa and the authorship of all the dramas attributed to him. Many of the verses quoted in old literature as Bhāsa's composition cannot be traced in the books current in his name. In spite of all these, the internal evidence of the *Bālacaritam* makes it appear as a composition of the third or early fourth century A.D.

Kālidāsa has eulogistically referred to Bhāsa. In the *Raghuvaṁśa* we find Suṣeṇa being introduced to Indumatī as the ruler of the Mathurā region in which lies Vṛndāvana, a charming place of enjoyment. He wears a jewel brighter than that which adorns the breast of Kṛṣṇa. The dance of peacocks in front of the beautiful caves of Govardhana has also been referred to.[58] The poet again compares in

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58 *Raghuvaṁśa*, VI. 49-51.

his *Meghadūta* the cloud adorned with a piece of rain-bow with Viṣṇu in the guise of Gopa adorned with a shining peacock feather.[59]

The date of Kālidāsa is not far removed from the time of the erection of the Deogarh temple. Both the poet and the temple belonged to the 5th century A.D. Had the Gopas really been the foreign Ābhīras as imagined by some eminent orientalists, Kālidāsa would not have taken delight in describing Kṛṣṇa as Viṣṇu dressed up like a Gopa. In interpreting the Deogarh temple figures of Nanda and Yaśōdā with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in their arms, Dr. J. N. Banerjea observes : "Yaśōdā wears a long skirt with a flowing veil covering her head and shoulders. The garment is characteristically foreign with a slight touch of late Gandhāra element in it, and tradition records that these cowherds of Mathurā and its environs belong to the Ābhīra stock."[60] When the eminent orientalists speak of the Ābhīras as foreigners, do they imply that no body tended cows in India before the migration of these Ābhīras into India ? Moreover, it has been pointed out in the Memoir of the Archaeological Survey (No. 70) on the Deogarh temple that Devakī has been dressed as a princess even while she was in prison, while Yaśodā is shown with the attire of a cowherdess. In the same temple there is another figure of Yaśodā looking bewildered with her right hand held to the chin because she was unable to find out how the cart laden with jars could have been overturned by her infant son. Here no one can detect even the faintest trace of foreign dress in Yaśodā.[61]

The killing of Pūtanā has been sculptured at Badami

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59 *Meghadūtam*, I. 15.

60 J. N. Banerjea—*Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. p. 422.

61 *The Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, p. 19.

in Cave II (Plate XII, b 4) and in Cave III (Plate XXIV, b 1). In the former Pūtanā is depicted standing with her arms raised up and Kṛṣṇa looking at her while sucking her breast sitting. In the latter she is represented lying down with an emaciated body. In the *Harivaṁśa* she is described as a bird.[62] *Nīlakaṇṭha* comments that this description befits her because she was the younger sister of Vakāsura. The sculptors of Badami and Sohagpur, however, have preferred to follow the *Bhāgavata*, which states that Pūtanā came in the guise of a beautiful young damsel (X. 6.5.). At Khajuraho we find Pūtanā with a wrinkled body crying for mercy with hands uplifted towards the sky[63] (Fig. 17 of the Khajuraho Museum).

The up-turning of the cart has been sculptured not only at Deogarh but also at Mandor, Badami and Sohagpur. The killing of Asuras sent by Kaṁsa for destroying Kṛṣṇa has received adequate attention from Indian sculptors who flourished between the fourth and the twelfth century A.D. Thus, we find at Mandor, Balarāma killing the ass-demon Dhenuka. The Badami caves II and IV have depicted the same scene. Paharpur Plate XXIX (a) shows how Pralambāsura approached Balarāma and how he lifted the latter. Balarāma crushed him to death while Kṛṣṇa looked on. This incident is related in the *Harivaṁśa*[64], *Viṣṇupurāṇa*[65], *Brahma Purāṇa*[66], *Bhāgavata*[67] and the *Padma Purāṇa*.[68] The Badami caves, Paharpur,

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62 *Harivaṁśa*, II, 6. 22.

63 Urmila Agrawal—*Khajuraho Sculptures and their significance*, p. 39.

64 *Hv.* II. 14. 12—28.

65 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 9. 1-30.

66 *Brahma Purāṇa*, 187. 1-30.

67 *Bh.* X. 18. 17-32.

68 *Padma Purāṇa*, 272. 140-143.

Khajuraho and Sohagpur reliefs depict the destruction of Ariṣṭa and Keśī by Kṛṣṇa.

The *Kāliyadamana* incident has been depicted at Mandor, Mamallapuram[69], Badami caves (Plate XII C 4 and XXIV C (1)) Khajuraho and Bheraghat.[70] No incident relating to Kṛṣṇa's life has received greater attention from all parts of India than his holding aloft the mount Govardhana. The scene is depicted at Mandor, Mogalarajapuram cave near Vijayawada, Mamallapuram, Paharpur, Ellora and Badami. During the rule of the Viṣṇukuṇḍin dynasty, the Mogalarajapuram cave was adorned with panels depicting the lifting of Govardhana. The divine aspect of Kṛṣṇa is emphasised here as well as at Ellora. But the human aspect of Kṛṣṇa has been stressed in the middle of the seventh century A.D. at the Kṛṣṇa Maṇḍapa at Mamallapuram on a rock which is 29 ft. long and 12 ft. high. Kṛṣṇa is seen holding the hill in his left hand. Several Gopīs are standing by the side of Kṛṣṇa. They wear tall headdresses and a few jewels, but are otherwise naked. Some are carrying on their head vessels full of dairy produce, some have got bundles of grass on their head and a few are holding their children by the hand. All round there is a herd of cows. Nearby there is a clear representation of a cowherd milking a cow.[71] "The peasant figures", observes Longhurst, "are clad in loin clothes and wear turbans. In style, some of the nude Gopīs are very similar to the female figures portrayed attending on Lakshmī in the Varāha Maṇḍapa indicating

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69 On one of the storeys of the Dharmarāja ratha—*vide* K. R. Srinivasan : *Some aspects of Religion*, etc., p. 17.

70 R. D. Banerji—*The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments*, p. 98.

71 A. H. Longhurst—*Pallava Architecture* (Memoir of Arch. Survey of India, No. 33), Plate 28(b).

that both works belong to same period."[72] The Mahabalipuram panels are important also for providing the first representation of the sentiments of friendship and love entertained by Kṛṣṇa towards the Gopas and Gopīs of Vraja. According to one expert of the Archaeological Department, the youth standing on the right half of the panel is Balarāma, leaning affectionately over the shoulders of a nearby cowherd. Kṛṣṇa stands next to him with a woman, marked out from the rest by her costume and pose and leaning on an attendant lady nearby. "Her importance would clearly make her out as Nappinnāi, the beloved of Kṛṣṇa."[73] Another authority identifies the lady with Rādhā.[74] His identification is corroborated by a South Indian scholar[75] who holds that Kṛṣṇa along with Rādhā attained popularity in the Tamil country in the early centuries of the Christian era.

O. C. Gangoly also finds in it the first representation of Rādhā in association with Kṛṣṇa. He further observes, "Here we visualise for the first time—Rādhā standing in close proximity with Kṛṣṇa—providing the spiritual and physical inspiration to the great Hero."[76] The sculptor or sculptors of Mamallapuram have achieved extraordinary success in showing the fact that being protected by Kṛṣṇa, the Gopas, Gopīs and even the cows manifest supreme unconcern at the fury of Indra who had taken recourse to all the means for harassing them with torrential rains

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72 *Ibid.* p. 39.

73 K. R. Srinivasan: *Some Aspects of Religion as revealed by early Monuments and Literature of the South* (Uuiv. of Madras, 1960), p. 17.

74 Suniti Kumar Chatterjee: *Bulletin of the Schaol of Oriental Studies*, London University, VIII, p. 462.

75 Dikshitar—*Indian Culture*, IV. pp. 267-71.

76 O. C. Gangoly: *The Arts of thePallavas*, p. 17.

and storm. The Paharpur sculpture (No. 19c) depicts Kṛṣṇa as four-armed. The bottom of the mountain is being supported by the upper right hand, while it is being uplifted in the centre with a finger of his left hand. Of his lower two hands, the left is shown as resting on the shoulder of his boy friend and the right on the breast of his lady friend. This is an unmistakable evidence of the association of erotic mysticism with the early life of Kṛṣṇa as early as the seventh century A.D.[77]

The artists of Angkor Vat in Cambodia also drew inspiration from several of the incidents in the early life of Kṛṣṇa. At one of the entrances to the wonderful temple we find youthful Kṛṣṇa with Khmer visage holding the Govardhana mountain not with his left hand but with his right hand. He holds a stick in his left hand. A friend is standing by his side and the other Gopas and Gopīs are looking at him respectfully. Kṛṣṇa is depicted as four-handed in another scene, in which he is eating up the offerings brought for Indra. The artists of Angkor Vat definitely relied on the version of *Kṛṣṇalīlā* as presented in the *Bhāgavata*. In representing the Yamalārjuna incident the two sons of Kuvera have been depicted as standing at the back. No other *Purāṇa* excepting the *Bhāgavata*[78] relates that Kṛṣṇa saved the people and cattle of Vṛndāvana from the forest fire by eating it up. The scene is represented at Angkor.[79] It may be also noted in this connection that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Harivaṁśa* and *Padma Purāṇa* do not know anything about the stealing of clothes of the Gopīs by Kṛṣṇa. The *Bhāgavata* alone describes the incident.[80]

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77 Dikshit : *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, p. 5.

78 *Bh.* X. 17. 25

79 J. PRZYLUSKI : *La Legende de Krishna dans les bas-reliefs d' Angkor-Vat*, pp. 91-97.

80 *Bh.* X. 22.

In the temple of the Gupta period at Deogarh a naked woman is depicted as concealing her breasts with both the hands. It has been surmised that the scene is connected with the *Vastra-haraṇa* episode.[81] According to the *Bhāgavata*, however, it was not a single Gopī who lost her cloth, but a group of them. But the *Śilappadikāram* alludes to the stealing of the cloth of Nāppinnāi alone by Māyavan or Kṛṣṇa: "How can we describe the form of Him who hid the clothes of the slender-waisted lady whose figure was bent to the point of breaking? Or how can we describe the face of the handsome lady who was touched by the regretful look of Him who hid her clothes? How can we describe the perfection of her who stole the heart of her husband, who deceived all in the water-sports of the Yamunā? How can we describe the form of Him who stole away the charm and the bangles of her, who had captivated him? How can we describe the face of the lady who hid it in her hands, when she lost her clothes and bangles? Or how can we describe the beauty of Him who was pained by the distress of her who hid her face in her hands?"[82]

The *Rāsalīlā* has been described in the *Harivaṁśa*[83], *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[84], *Bhāgavata*[85], *Brahma Purāṇa*[86] and *Padma-Purāṇa.*[87] But its only sculptural representation is to be found at Khajuraho (Fig. 17 at the Khajuraho Museum). In the right inner *Pradakṣiṇa* of the Lakṣmaṇa temple Kṛṣṇa is depicted playing on the flute with his lady-love

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81 *The Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, M 6, p. 20.

82 *Śilappadikāram*, trs. by Dikshitar, p. 233.

83 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 20.

84 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 13.

85 *Bh.* X, 29-33

86 *Brahma-Purāṇa*, 189. 1-45.

87 *Padma Purāṇa*, 272. 158-180.

at his side. She must be Rādhā as both the figures are shown wearing *Kirīṭa-mukuṭas.*[88]

As in the *Bālacaritam* so also in the *Śilappadikāraṃ*, the group dancing, which is called here the Kuravai dance is an innocent form of amusement. It is performed in the presence of Aśodāi (Yaśodā). Pinnai or Nāppinnāi, who is the Tamil counter-part of Rādhā, dances with Kṛṣṇa to her left and Balarāma to her right as the following passage will show : "With fragrant flower-buds in her locks of hair, Pinnāi, has to her left, the sea-coloured God, who hid the sun with his discus, and to her right, his elder brother, whose body is white like the moon."[89] The description continues. "Our Pinnāi, with the nape of her neck bent, stood on the right of Māya-van bright as the neck of a peacock, and on the left of his elder brother whose body was white as a flower-stalk. O, splendid was the Kuravai dance praised by Aśodāi and danced in the *taterum-taanram* by Māyavan, his elder brother and Pinnai of the striped bracelet, which disappeared the flower wreathes on the curly heads of the young cowherdesses who with measured tread were beating time with their bangled hands.[90]" As Patañjali in his *Mahā-bhāṣya*[91] referred to the dramatic representation of the destruction of Kaṁsa by Vāsudeva so does Ilango, the author of the *Śilappadikāram*, describe all these as parts of a melodramatic performance by women, playing the parts of Māyavan, Balarāma and Pinnāi. The story, therefore, must have been an old one. Kōvaḷan, the hero of the book and Kannakī the heroine are compared to

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88 Urmila Agrawal ; *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.
89 *Śilappadikāram*, trs. by Dikshitar, p. 233.
90 *Ibid.* p. 233.
91 *Mahābhāṣya*, III. 1. 26.

Kṛṣṇa and Nappinnāi, the cowherdess whom Kṛṣṇa took in wedlock.[92] Saint Āṇḍāl describes Nappiannāi as the daughter-in-law of Nandagopa.[93] Thus in the old Tamil version of the story relating to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa they are represented as a married couple. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, follows this tradition when it relates how Brahmā playing the role of both the father and the priest married Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa.[94] In the Nimbārka sect of Vaiṣṇavas Rādhā is worshipped as the wedded wife of Kṛṣṇa. Jīva Gosvāmin in his *Gopāla-Campū* has devoted several chapters describing the marriage of Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa.[95] It is not proper to ignore all those traditions and dub Rādhā contemptuously as the mistress of Kṛṣṇa.[96]

For a correct appreciation of the character and personality of Kṛṣṇa it is necessary to form an idea of his age at the time of happening of various notable incidents in his early life. Many attempts have been made in ancient and mediaeval times in this direction, but no unanimity of opinion is noticeable. The *Bhāgavata* mentions the age of Kṛṣṇa only in a few cases. For example, it relates that Kṛṣṇa overturned the cart when he was only 3 months old.[97] He destroyed the demon named Tṛiṇāvartta at the age of one only.[98] Aghāsura was killed by him when he was

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92 *Śilappadikāram*, p. 221.

93 Tiruppāvai verse 18. K. R. Srinivasan writes: "The Kṛṣṇa-Nappinnāi cult is referred to profusely in *Nālāyiraprabandham*, e.g by Āṇḍāl in her *Tiruppavai* (Verse 19, line 19) assignable to the second half of the 9th century A.D. (*Some aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South*, p. 16).

94 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, IV. 15.125-130.

95 *Gopā'a-Campū*, *Uttaracampū*, Ch. 32-36.

96 Asoka Majumdar : *ABORI*, Vol. 36, pp. 231-257.

97 *Bh.* II. 7.27.

98 *Bh.* X, 26.6.

five years old.[99] Dhenukāsura was destroyed after the sixth year of Kṛṣṇa, because the *Bhāgavata* states that he did so when he had attained the *Pauganḍa* age which has been defined as the age between six and ten. At the time of holding aloft the Govardhana mountain Kṛṣṇa was seven years of age. No other age-chart has been given with regard to other incidents in the *Bhāgavata* itself. But Jīva Gosvāmin states in his commentary on the *Bhāgavata* that Kṛṣṇa was tied down to the wooden mortar at the age of three and that he began to play the part of cowherd after completing his third year. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, however, definitely states that Kṛṣṇa began to tend the cows at the age of seven.[100] While Jīva Gosvāmin holds that the *Rāsalīlā* took place when Kṛṣṇa was 8 years 1 month and 23 days old, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says that Kṛṣṇa had attained the *Kaiśora* age, which intervenes between the eleventh and the fifteenth year of a person. A person is said to be a *Yuvā* at the age of sixteen. The erotic events, which are related in the *Harivaṁśa*[101] *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[102] and the *Bhāgavata* in connection with the *Rāsalīlā*[103] could not have taken place with an ordinary boy of eight as their hero. Viśvanātha Chakravartī, however, observes that an extraordinary strong boy like Kṛṣṇa could attain *Kaiśora* at the age of eight.[104] The *Harivaṁśa*[105] speaks of the *Kaiśora* age of Kṛṣṇa at the time of the beginning of the *Rāsalīlā*; but it refers to Kṛṣṇa as a *Vāla* child several times while describing his

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99 *Bh.* X. 12.36.

100 *Viṣṇu P.*, V. 6. 35.

101 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 21. 30-34.

102 *Viṣṇu P.*, IV. 14.

103 *Bh.* X. 29. 46, X. 31. 17, X. 33. 19-25.

104 Viśvanātha Chakravarti's *Sārārathadarśini* on *Bh.* X. 29. 1.

105 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 21. 18.

fight with the elephant and wrestlers of Kaṁsa and the killing of Kaṁsa himself.[106] Kṣemendra, who flourished in the last quarter of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, describes Kṛṣṇa in his '*Daśāvatāra Carita*' as playing with the Gopa damsels when he was flushed with youth and erotic sentiments. Though this view is contrary to that of the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata*, yet the *Mahābhārata* lends some support to it.

In the *Sabhā Parva* we find Kṛṣṇa relating to Yudhiṣṭhira how, on being requested by the old people of the Bhoja family he took the initiative in killing Kaṁsa. He first of all won over Akrūra to his side by offering him the hand of the beautiful daughter of Āhuka and then with the help of Saṅkarṣaṇa killed Kaṁsa and his brother Sunāma for the sake of relieving his relatives from the oppressive rule of Kaṁsa. The passage has been accepted as genuine in the critical edition.[107]

This passage has not received as yet the attention it deserves. Sri Aurobindo selected it as one of the few passages of the epic for translation, but did not explain its importance. His rendering is as follows :

Whereupon drew
The Bhoja lords together, those whom tired
His cruelties, and these with me conspired
Seeking a national deliverer
Therefore I rose and Ahuka's daughter, her
The sweet and slender, gave to Akrura then
Made free from tyranny my countrymen
With me was Ram, the plougher of the foe
Our swords laid Kamsa and Sunaman low.[108]

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106 *Ibid.* 2. 27. 41 and 53 ; 2. 30. 19.

107 *Mbh.* II. 13. 31-33.

108 Sri Aurobindo : *Vyāsa and Vālmiki.*

Again in the *Udyogaparva* Kṛṣṇa says that Kaṁsa was forsaken by his relatives for whose welfare he (Kṛṣṇa) killed Kaṁsa in a great battle.[109]

The bas-relief in Cave II (XII d 2) of Badami has been interpreted as the killing of Muṣṭika and Kaṁsa's brothers. But the person, who is being beaten by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from the left and the right, is most probably that of Kaṁsa himself. The sculptor has depicted the two brothers not as grown-up youths. The Paharpur sculpture No. 12 shows Kṛṣṇa holding the kneeling Kaṁsa by the hair and Balarāma with his club in the hand is looking on. The two brothers have been depicted here as heroic youths and not mere boys. A figure in the Khajuraho Museum (Fig. 17) shows Kṛṣṇa holding Kaṁsa's hand and hair with his right hand and striking him with his left fist.

The *Mahābhārata* passages referred to above shows that Kṛṣṇa could not have been a mere boy of eleven, as the *Bhāgavata* would make him to be.[110] He is revealed here as a consummate diplomat. The elders of the Bhojas appeal to him for deliverance from Kaṁsa's tyranny. He does not rush forward to their rescue, but first of all wins over Akrūra by marrying him with a beautiful damsel, the daughter of Āhuka. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* Āhuka was the father of Ugrasena and grandfather of Kaṁsa. It is extremely doubtful whether Kṛṣṇa could have arranged the marriage of the sister of his maternal grandfather. But the *Harivaṁśa* clearly states that Akrūra's wife was Sugātrī Ugrasenī.[111] Sugātrī is an equivalent of the term Sutanu used for Āhuka's daughter in

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109 *Mbh.* V. 126. 36-38.
110 *Bh.* III. 2. 26.
111 *Hv.* 1.34.14.

the *Mahābhārata*.[112] It is, therefore, more reasonable to hold that Akrūra was married to Ugrasena's daughter, that is the sister of Kaṁsa. But more plausibly the Āhuka referred to here was some other person because the *Mahābhārata* says that he had one hundred sons[113], while the *Purāṇas* relate that Āhuka had two sons—Devaka and Ugrasena.[114]

Ugrasena must have taken an active part in the conspiracy. Kaṁsa like Aurangzeb put his father in prison and went even a step further by disowning his father-hood publicly. The *Harivaṁśa* relates how Kaṁsa told his Superintendent of elephants in the royal hall that Nārada had revealed to him that his real father was Drumila, the King of Saubha, and not Ugrasena.[115] The same work relates how Kaṁsa severely upbraided Vasudeva and Andhaka thereupon repudiated Kaṁsa.[116] This shows that there was a regular conspiracy against Kaṁsa.

Kṛṣṇa, having killed Kaṁsa, rewarded Ugrasena with the headship of the clan. Akrūra played a double game. While commissioning him to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from Vṛndāvana, Kaṁsa said "Akrūra, you do this rare type of work which is pleasing to me, if you have not been won over by Vāsudeva."[117] This clearly proves that a large section of the Yādavas deserted Kaṁsa and went over to the side of Vāsudeva.

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112 *Mbh.* II. 13.32.
113 *Mbh.* II. 13.45.
114 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 14., *Harivaṁśa*, I. 37. 26.
115 *Hv.* II. 28 54.
116 *Ibid.* II, Chs. 22 and 23.
117 *Ibid.* II. 22. 98.

Appendix II

HOLY PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EARLY LIFE OF KṚṢṆA

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*[1] written in Bengali and the *Bhaktamāla*,[2] written in Hindi, relate that the holy places associated with the early life of Kṛṣṇa had become obscure and that Rūpa and Sanātana re-discovered these places under the instruction of Caitanya. A sober historian like Growse writes : "Till the close of the sixteenth century except in the neighbourhood of the great thoroughfare there was only here and there a scattered hamlet in the midst of unclaimed woodland. The Vaisnava culture there first developed into the present form under the influence of Rūpa and Sanātana, the celebrated Bengali Gosains of Vṛndāvana."[3] From these accounts many uncritical readers, with pretensions for being critical, jump to the conclusion that all the sacred places in Vraja owe their origin to the sixteenth century. But this is far from the truth.

Alberuni states that Mathurā like Vāranasī, Puṣkara and Kurukṣetra is a holy place, "Crowded with Brāhmaṇas, is venerated because Vāsudeva was there born and brought up, in a place in the neighbourhood called Nandagola"[4]. This place may be identified either with Nandagōkula or with Nandīśvara. In the first quarter of the twelfth century Lakṣmīdhara describes the following twenty-five sites as famous places of pilgrimage in the Mathurā region :- Arkasthala, Asikuṇḍa, Astamana, Uṣara-bhañjanaka,

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1. *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, II. 19.
2. *Bhaktamāla*, p. 840.
3. Growse—*A District Memoir of Mathura*, p. 183.
4. Alberuni's India, (Sachau), II, pp. 147-148.

Kaṇakakṣetra, Karmāvarohana, Kālīya Hṛada, Govardhana, Jāmbīracampaka, Tāmraprabha, Nandanavana, Nandīguhā, Prakīrtana, Vinduprabha, Vṛndāvana, Bhāṇḍīraka, Yamalārjunakuṇḍa, Yamunā, Rādhākuṇḍa, Vatsaprakīḍana, Ballabhaka, Vitānaka, Vīrasthala, Saptasāmudraka and Sōmakuṇḍa.[5] He cites the authority of the *Varāha Purāṇa* and quotes verses from it in support of his contention that these are holy places. But as many as fifteen of these places must have fallen into oblivion in the sixteenth century, when Rūpa Gosvāmin wrote his *Mathurā-māhātmya*. Among the twenty-five places referred to above by Lakṣmīdhara, Rūpa mentions only Vṛndāvana, Yamunā, *Kalīyahṛada*, Govardhana, Rādhākuṇḍa, Bhāṇḍīraka, Arkasthala, Asikuṇḍa, Vatsaprakīḍana and Somakuṇḍa. He has given an account of seventy holy places in the Mathurā region. He cites the authority of the *Ādivarāha*, *Padma*, *Brahma-vaivarta*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Bhaviṣya*, *Bhāgavata*, *Matsya*, *Vāmana*, *Vāyu*, *Varāha*, *Viṣṇu*, *Bṛhannāradīya*, *Saura* and *Skanda Puraṇa* besides *Gautamīya-tantra*, *Vṛhat-Gautamīya tantra* and *Viṣṇu-dharmōttara*. Many other sites had acquired sanctity as places of pilgrimage when he wrote this book, but as he could not find any reference to them in the *Purāṇas* he preferred to remain silent over them.

Raghunāthadāsa, his contemporary, mentions some of these places in his works. For example, he states that the residence of Upananda, the brother of Nanda, and father-in-law of Kundalatā is at Sāhār.[6] There exists a village of that name. It is situated four miles to the north of Sūryakuṇḍa. He mentions Rāvala as the birth-place of Rādhā and the abode of her father Vṛṣabhānu.[7] Neither he, nor Rūpa

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5. Lakṣmīdhara—*Kṛtya-kalpa-taru*, *Tīrtha-vivecana Kāṇḍa*, pp. 187-196.
6. *Dānakeli-cintāmaṇi*, Verse 3.
7. *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*, *Stavā-valī*, VIII. 90.

refer to *Varṣāṇā*, the place where the pilgrims are now shown the tank of Vṛṣabhānu and various other places, associated with the early life of Rādhā. The orthodox Vaiṣṇavas explain this by asserting that though Rādhā was born at Rāvala, Vṛṣabhānu shifted his capital to Varṣāna later on. The absence of any reference to Yāvaṭa, the village where Rādhā's mother-in-law, Jaṭilā resides, in the books written by Rūpa and Raghunātha, is another curious fact. It is probably due to their reluctance to admit the reality of Rādhā's marriage with Āyāna or Abhimanyu. Rāiśekhara, who is a disciple of Raghunandana, a contemporary of Caitanya, writes a poem on the scandal-mongering propensity of the people of Yāvaṭa.[8] The village, therefore, was in existence in the sixteenth century. It appears that some villages owed their origin to folk-culture current in the Mathurā region, and not to the Paurāṇic tradition. But it is equally true that the dramas and poems of Rūpa Gosvāmin also gave rise to some holy places.

Places of pilgrimage rise and decline on account of religious, economic and geographical causes. If certain places are connected with some particular features of a cult, with the disappearance of those features the places lose their importance. Similarly, some people interested in promoting a place as a holy site, may succeed in drawing pilgrims there. But in the absence of heirs and successors of these persons the places would fall into decay and later literature would be silent about them. Then again, changes in the course of rivers and the shifting of population from one area to another sometimes bring certain places into prominence or oblivion. Numerous examples of these principles may be found in the history of holy sites in the Vraja during the last eight hundred years. If only ten out of the twenty-five

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8. *Rāiśekharer Padāvali* (Cal. Univ. ed.), p. 159, *Padakalpataru*, 2584.

sites described as holy by Lakṣmīdhara survived at the time of Rūpa, nine of the seventy Tīrthas outlined in the *Mathurā—māhātmya* written by this great theologian of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism, were altogether forgotten when Narahari Chakravartī wrote his *Bhakti-ratnākara* less than two hundred years after him. Narahari has given an account of as many as 334 holy sites in Vraja, but he does not include among these the following places described by Rūpa :—Ardha-chandra-tīrtha, Iṣṭakāśrama, Gōvinda-tīrtha, Dhrauvyāśrama, Bharatasyāmedhikam, Bhāgīrathī-saṅgama, Yamanakam, Śaukarīpurī and Sarasvatīsaṅgama.

The omission of Śaukarīpurī is significant because according to Rūpa Gosvāmin the Mathurā region covered an area of twenty Yojanas, or 160 miles spreading from Yāyāvara to Saukarī-vaṭeśvara.[9] Recent Vaiṣṇava scholars like Haridāsa Dāsa, Brajamohan Dāsa and Gobardhana Dāsa, who have written books on the *Parikramā* or Vraja-maṇḍala fail to mention either Yāyāvara or Śaukarīpurī. These places have, therefore, fallen into utter oblivion.

A book named *Vraja-bhakti-vilāsa*, written in doggerel Sanskrit verses, and attributed to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (C.1531-1643), reveals how *Tīrthas* are *manufactured* by interested parties.[10] While Rūpa Gosvāmin, depending on the authority of the *Ādi Varāha* and *Mathurākhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, gives an account of only twelve forests in the Vraja and Narahari Chakravartī does not go beyond these, this book describes 12 Vanas, 12 Upavanas, 12 Prativanas, 12 Ādivanas, in the first chapter and 12 Tapōvanas, 12 Mokṣa-vanas, 12 Kāmavanas, 12 Arthavanas, 12 Dharmavanas,

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9 *Mathurā-māhātmya*, Section 157.

10 *Vraja-bhakti-vilāsa* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa published by Bābā Kṛṣṇa-dāsa from Kusuma-sarōvara, P. O. Radhakund in V. S. 2008, (1961 A. D.). It covers 264 pages (Royal size).

and 12 Siddhavanas in the second chapter. The *mantras* which a pilgrim has to recite in each of these places are also written there. It quotes the authority of the well-known *Purāṇas* to show the sanctity of the various places. But unfortunately most of the verses can not be traced in the current editions of these *Purāṇas*.

The identification of Vṛndāvana has given rise to some acute controversy. Nundolal De regards the identification of the present town with the place described in the *Purāṇas* as extremely doubtful. He contends that Mathurā and Vṛndāvana should be situated on the opposite banks of the Yamunā. He cites the authority of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[11] But this *Purāṇa* states that Akrūra brought Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on a chariot from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā and never crossed the river. Both the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* state that it took practically the whole day to reach Mathurā from Vṛndāvana, though the horses yoked to the chariot are described to have the speed of the air.[12] The distance between the present Vṛndāvana and Mathurā is only seven miles. But Sanātana Gosvāmin argues that the connotation of the term Vṛndāvana is much wider. Commenting on the *Bhāgavata* X. 11. 36 which states that Yaśodā and Rohinī became very much pleased to see Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the bank of the Yamunā, he observes that Vraja extends from a distance of two miles from the south of Kālīyahṛada to two *Yojanas* or sixteen miles; and though Nandīśvara, the chief residence of Nanda, is at a considerable distance from the Yamunā, yet it appeared to them close by because the people of that age could walk fast. Jīva Gosvāmin holds that according to this description of

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11 Nundolal De, *op. cit.* p. 42. He quotes *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V.18.33.

12 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V.19.9. and *Bhāgavata*, X.41.6.

Vṛndāvana found in the *Harivaṁśa*, Govardhana hill is not far off from it and, therefore, the area of Vraja extends from the south of the Kālīya-hrada over sixteen miles in length and eight miles in breadth.[13] The *Nāradīya Purāṇa* purports to say that Vṛndāvana is near Govardhana and along the Yamunā and Nandīgrāma.[14] At one time the Yamunā used to flow close to Govardhana. The old river bed is still visible near Dānaghāṭi, Govardhana town but Nandīgrāma or Nandīśvara is far off from Govardhana. These difficulties are explained away by Vallabhāchārya by imagining that the description in the *Bhāgavata* refers not to the present age but to another *Kalpa*.[15] Rūpa Gosvāmin holds that the Vraja area is like a lotus; when it blooms fully, the different places of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* appear to be distant from one another; but when it contracts after the sunset the places come close together, thereby facilitating the meeting of Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa.

Rūpa Gosvāmin as well as Mitra Miśra quote the verse of *Ādi Varāha* stating that the Mathurā region extends over twenty *Yojanas* or 160 miles. The Vaiṣṇavas at present go round 168 miles in pilgrimage during autumn every year. But Rūpa Gosvāmin quotes also the version of the *Vāyupurāṇa*, according to which the area of the Mathurā region covers forty *Yojanas* or 320 miles. This view has not found favour with any of the Vaiṣṇava sects. The followers of Nimbārka go round the holy places within a compass of 168 miles in 45 days starting on the second day after the *Janmāṣṭamī*. The

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13 Jiva Gosvāmin—*Krama Sandarbha*, commentary of the *Bhāgavata*, X.11.36.

14 *Nāradiya Purāṇa*, II.80.6-7.

15 Commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* called *Subōdhinī*, X.11.35.

followers of Vallabhāchārya, however, start on the second or third day after the *Rādhāṣṭamī*, or the birthday of Rādhā and complete the going round in two months. A large number of tents and camp-followers accompany the pilgrims of this sect and big feasts are held every noon at the place of halting. The Bengal Vaiṣṇavas quietly go round the places either on the second day after the *Janmāṣṭamī* or on the bright *Ēkādaśī* day in *Āśvin* and complete the tour in course of a month.

Narahari Chakravartī has given an elaborate description of the pilgrimage of Śrīnivāsa Āchārya in the Vraja region in his *Bhakti-ratnākara*. He has mentioned the names of 334 holy places and has also related the incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa and his associates connected with these. Nearly 250 years have elapsed since he has written this account and some of the places mentioned by him can not be traced at present. We give below a gist of the itenary of Śrīnivāsa Āchārya in Vraja according to the *Bhaktiratnākara* noting down also the places mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara in the 12th century, Rūpa Gosvāmin in the 16th and Mitra Miśra in the 17th century and specifying which of these places can not be traced at present.

ABBREVIATIONS USED :

L = Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Vol. VIII, page no. mentioned.

M = *Mathurā-māhātmya* of Rūpa Gosvāmin, Verse no. mentioned.

N = Narahari Chakravartī, *Bhakti-ratnākara* (Berhampore ed.)

Not = Not traceable at present.

R = Raghunātha Dāsa, Stavāvalī, Verse no. mentioned.

T = *Tīrthaprakāśa* of Mitra Miśra.

V = *Varāha Purāṇa,* page no. Bibliotheca Indica ed.
The itenary begins from the birth place of Kṛṣṇa.

THE GHĀṬS OF MATHURĀ

(1) Viśrānti—M 112, 172, 233, 243-46 ; T 510-11, N 170 There is also one Viśrāṇti at Madhuvana according to *Padma Purāṇa* VI. 209. 1-5., V 853, 889. But N says Mathurā is in Madhuvana N 167. Kṛṣṇa is said to have taken rest here after killing Kaṁsa.

(2) Avimukta *tīrtha*. M 257,466, T 511, V 5, N 172.
(3) Guhya *tīrtha*, M 259, N 172.
(4) Prayāga *tīrtha*, V 853, T 511, N 172, 260-61.
(5) Kanakhala *tīrtha*, V 854, M 263, T 512, N 172.
(6) Tinduka *tīrtha*, V 854, M 264, 466, T 512, N 172.
(7) Sūrya *tīrtha*, V 855, M 265, T 512, 515, N 173.
(8) Vaṭasvāmi *tīrtha* M 267, T 512, N 173.
(9) Dhruva *tīrtha* V 856, M 270-71, 273, 470, T 512, N 173.
(10) Ṛṣi *tīrtha* V 858, M 274-75, T 513, N 174.
(11) Mokṣa *tīrtha* V 856, M 276, N 175.
(12) Koṭi *tīrtha* V 856, 865, M 277, 291, 466, T 513, 514, N 175, 178.
(13) Bodhi *tīrtha* M 278, 291, T 513, N 175.
(14) Nava *tīrtha* M 280, N 175.
(15) Sañjamana V 857, M 281, T 513, N 176.
(16) Dhārāpatana V 863, M 282, T 513, 527, N 176.
(17) Nāga *tīrtha*—V 864, M 283, T 513, N 176.
(18) Ghaṇṭā-bharaṇa V 864, 895, M 284, T 513, 527, N 176.
(19) Brahma *tīrtha* N 177.
(20) Soma *tīrtha*—V 864, 895 ; M 286, 466, T 514, N 177.
(21) Sarasvatīpatana—V 864, M 287, T 514, N 177.

(22) Cakŕa *tīrtha*—V 899, M 288, 467, 470, R 8, 79, T 514, N 177, 208.
(23) Daśāśvamedha *tīrtha*—V 865, M 289, 293, T 514, N 178.
(24) Vighnarāja *tīrtha*—V 865, T 514, N 178.

OTHER PLACES—Mathurā town

(25) Asikuṇḍa—South of Nava*tīrtha*—L 187, V 907, 917-19, M 297-98, 466, T 513, N 179.
(26) Catuḥ-Sāmudrika well—V 886, M 299, 471, N 180
(27) Ruins of the palace of Kaṁsa, N 183.
(28) Kubjā well—associated with the meeting of Kṛṣṇa with Kubjā., N 183.
(29) Baladeva kuṇḍa—N 183.
(30) Kṛṣṇa kūpa—N 183.

THE TWELVE FORESTS

On the eastern bank of the Yamunā we find from north to south Bhadravana, Bhāṇḍīravana, Velāvana, Lauhavana and Mahāvana. The other seven forests are situated on the western bank. Of these Kāmyavana is in the westernmost point, Khadiravana to the west of the Railway line, Bahulāvana, Madhuvana, Tālavana and Kumudavana lie to the south-west of the same. We will now describe the places according to the sequence of the narration of Narahari.

(31) Madhuvana—it is situated at a distance of 2½ miles south-west from Mathurā V 860, 898, M 202, 204-6, 208-10, 215, 352, 354, T 517, N 185.
(32) Tālavana—two miles from Madhuvana V 880, 898, M 355-58, T 517 ; N 185.
(33) Kumudavana—M 359, T 518, N 185.
(34) Datihā—Kṛṣṇa killed Dantāvakra here and his grandson Vajranābha named the place as Datihā. N 186.

(35) Ā-ō-re—its modern name is Alipur. It is at a distance of half-a-mile from Kheri, whose old name was Gaurabai and which is referred to by Jīva Gosvāmin in his *Gopāla-campū*. Nanda and the cowherds welcomed Kṛṣṇa on his return to Vraja from this place. The return is described in the *Padma Purāṇa* only, N 186.

(36) Gaurabai—referred to above—No. 186.

(37) Ṣaṣṭī-Karāṭavī—N 187. Not.

(38) Śakaṭārohana, now called Sakaṭā, M 462-65, N 188. Not.

(39) Garuḍa-govinda—N 188. Śrīdāma is said to have played with Garuḍa here.

(40) Gandheśvara—N 188. Kṛṣṇa used scents here.

(41) Sātoaṅ—N 188.

(42) Vahulāvana—modern name is Bati. Four miles from Sātoaṅ. Vahulā, according to the *Skanda Purāṇa* is a wife of Hari. There was a lotus tank here. V 877, M 364-67, T 518, N 189. East of the village Bati lie the Saṅkarṣaṇa Kuṇḍa (N. 189) and Mānasarasī.

(43) Mayūragrāma, modern Maro, two miles South-west of the Vahulāvana—N 190.

(44) Dakṣiṇagrāma—N 190.

(45) Vasatīgrāma, where Rādhā's father is said to have lived for some time, N 190.

(46) Rāol—modern Ral, where Nanda lived for some time, R 8-90, N 190.

(47) Ariṭ—The demon Ariṣṭa was killed here by Kṛṣṇa. This place became famous as the Rādhākuṇḍa N 190.

(48) Mānasa Gaṅgā—at Govardhana town V 914, 915, R 8/91, T 516, N 191.

(49) Rādhākuṇḍa—this tank is said to have been excavated by Kṛṣṇa so that he might be absolved of the sin of killing Ariṣṭa who had assumed the shape of a bull. It has become one of the most favourite places of residence of anchorites belonging to the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin and Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja composed their famous works here.
L 190, R 5/5, M 448-52, T 516, N 191. M quotes *Padma Purāṇa* and *Skanda Purāṇa* on it.

(50) Śyāmakuṇḍa—adjacent to Rādhākuṇḍa N 196. *Gopāla Campū* Ch XXX.

(51) Sakhīsthalī—the place of residence of Candrāvalī, the rival of Rādhā for the affection of Kṛṣṇa. N 197, 244.

(52) Mālyahārikuṇḍa – near Rādhākuṇḍa. It is referred to by R in his *Muktā-Caritam*, N 198.

(53) Śivakhorakuṇḍa and Bhānukhōra Kuṇḍa N 198. The former may be identical with Śivakuṇḍa V 857.

(54) Subala's Kuñja—to the north of Śyāmakuṇḍa, N 199.

(55) Mukharāi village—said to be named after Mukharā, the maternal grandmother of Rādhā. It is at a distance of 1¼ mile from Rādhākuṇḍa. As the name of the grand-mother of Rādhā is found in the work of Rūpa Gosvāmin for the first time, it is quite likely that the village arose after the sixteenth century. But it may not be unlikely that Rūpa heard the local tradition about the grand-mother of Rādhā and mentioned her name in the *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Gaṇōddeśa-Dīpikā.*

(56) Kusuma Sarōvara—Midway between Rādhākuṇḍa and Govardhana town, N 199.

(57) Nāradakuṇḍa—N 199.

(58) Pāligrāma—named after the head of group of Gopīs, N. 199.

(59) Parasuli—Kṛṣṇa is said to have performed the *Rāsa* in the spring season here. N 200.

(60) Paiṭhagrāma, N 201. Kṛṣṇa having disappeared from the *Rāsa* hid himself here and manifested four hands. But when Rādhā came in search of him, his two extra hands dropped down, because Rādhā is love incarnate and before her no majestic power of Kṛṣṇa can remain. This incident is related in the *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* (*Nāyikā Prakaraṇa* V. 6) and most probably the village arose on account of this narrative. But as in the case of Mukharāi, Rūpa Gosvāmin might have recorded a local tradition in his book. The Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavas does not enjoy much popularity or exercise great influence over the people of Vraja now. How could then villages be named after the characters or incidents created by Rūpa and other Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana ?

(61) Ānwār, Āniyore or Annakūṭa village, situated at a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Govardhana town. Here Kṛṣṇa ate up all the food that was offered to Mount Govardhana. R 8/75, N 201.

(62) Govindakuṇḍa—Indra having been outwitted by Kṛṣṇa anointed him here. Mādhavendrapurī, the Guru of Caitanya, spiritual preceptor, used to reside here. M 446-47, R 8/74, N 202.

(63) Dāna-nivartana-kuṇḍa—R 8/78, N 202.

(64) Gāṅṭhulī—N 203, 212. The deity Gopāla worshipped by Mādhavendrapurī, used to stay here occasionally.

(65) Apsarā kuṇḍa—V Ch. 164/19.

(66) Govardhana—L 192, V 913. M 429-42, T 516, N 203, famous hill.

(67) Govardhana-Cave : N 203, now this village known as Puchhari ; but this name is not found in N. Some big temples have been constructed here recently.

(68) Dānaghāṭi, near Govardhana town, R 8/77 ; N 203, Kṛṣṇa exacted the toll from Rādhā at this place.

(69) Brahmakuṇḍa—M 404-411. N 204. Not.

(70) Chakra*tīrtha*—on the bank of Mānasagaṅgā in Govardhana.

(71) Kaon-nai (Why not) : Rādhā is said to have asked her friend here why did not Kṛṣṇa come, hence the name of the village. N 112.

(72) Kāmya-vana—V 861, 898 ; M 360-62, T 518, N 214.

In the eighteenth century N found in the Kāmyavana Caraṇa kuṇḍa, Dharmakuṇḍa, Viśoka, Maṇikarṇikā, Varāhakuṇḍa, Yaśodā Kuṇḍa, Nāradakuṇḍa, Setubandha kuṇḍa, Kāśī kuṇḍa, Tapokuṇḍa, Dhyānakuṇḍa, Krīḍākuṇḍa, Gopakuṇḍa, Ghoṣa-rāṇī-kuṇḍa, Vihvala kuṇḍa, Śyāma kuṇḍa, Lalitākuṇḍa, Viśākhākuṇḍa, Mānakuṇḍa, Mohinī kuṇḍa and Balabhadrakuṇḍa and described the reason why each of them became a place of pilgrimage. In the nineteenth century the number of Kuṇḍas increased to eighty-four, the names of which are given in the *Vraja-darpaṇa* by Brajamohan Dasa Babaji. But this too failed to satisfy the greed of the Pāṇḍās or guides. They managed to add to the list of holy places in the Kāmyavana 350 wells each of which of course is to be worshipped by paying a suitable fee.[16]

(73) Barsānā—Abode of Vṛṣabhānu, father of Rādhā, but not mentioned in any of the old authorities except N 221.

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16 *Vrajabhaktivilāsa* attributed to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and quoted in Govardhana Dāsa's *Braja-dhāma*, Part I, pp. 65-66. The writer, however, adds that most of these wells have been destroyed by demons.

(74) Premasarovara—N 220 Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa met here and cried on account of pang of separation, though they were both present at the same place.

(75) Yāvaṭa, Jāvata or Yāo, the place where Rādhā's supposed husband lived. N 218, 232. It is situated at a distance of two miles from Nandīśvara.

(76) Nandīśvara—M 460-61, R. V. 10, VIII. 8, N 223.

Nanda is said to have settled here after leaving Gōkula. This has become a prominent centre of pilgrimage. Rūpa Gosvāmin could not find any reference to this place in any of the *Purāṇas*. He quotes an anonymous verse to the effect that a person gets all his desires fulfilled if he takes his bath in the Pāvana-sarōvara and then pays a visit to the temple of Kṛṣṇa on the Nandīśvara hill. As many as 56 Kuṇḍas or tanks have been excavated round the hillock. One of these is called Kṣuṇṇahāra, said to be the place where Nanda's father, Paryanya performed austerities. This as well as the Pāvana-sarōvara are referred to by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin in his *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*.

(77) Gedukhor—N 231, the place where Kṛṣṇa is supposed to have played ball.

(78) Vijōāri N 243 ; N states that the village is called Vijōāri or lightening because at the time of departure of Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā the Gopīs fainted on the street and looked like a mass of lightening.

(79) Parsō N 243 (day after to-morrow) it is so called because Kṛṣṇa assured the Gopīs that he would come back from Mathurā to-morrow or the day after.

(80) Lohavana V 861, M 375, T 519, N 276. N writes that Kṛṣṇa used to tend cows here and that he killed a demon named Lohajaṅgha though no such incident is described in the *Purāṇas*.

(81) Khadiravana V 861, 898, M 359, T 519. It is two miles off from Yāvaṭa. Vakāsura is said to have been killed by Kṛṣṇa at a distance of one mile from it.

(82) Bhadravana. V 861, 898, M 368, T 519.

(83) Bhāṇḍīravana L 187, *Bhāgavata* X. 18. 22 ; X. 19. 13, V. 862, 899 ; M 377-79, T 520, N 268, 274-75.

N states that Rādhā used to meet Kṛṣṇa here. One day while Kṛṣṇa was wrestling with his friends here, Lalitā desired to see him wrestling with Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa could not overpower Rādhā.

(84) Vilvavana V 862, 898, M 376, T 519, N 275.

(85) Mahāvana V 861, 898 ; M 370-74 ; T 519, N 277, 282.

The earliest life of Kṛṣṇa was spent here. Rūpa Gosvāmin quotes the *Ādivarāha Purāṇa* to show that it was here that the cart was upturned and the pair of Arjuna tree was broken by Kṛṣṇa. The same *Purāṇa* records that there is a well named Saptasāmudrika here and the offering of *Piṇḍa* to forefathers at this place is as efficatious as it is at Gayā. The well has been mentioned as a place of pilgrimage by Lakṣmīdhara too. But the modern guide books do not mention this place and it appears to have fallen into oblivion.

(86) Gōkula—situated at a distance of about a mile from Mahāvana. The Gosvāmis of the Vallabhācārya's sect claim it to be the genuine place where Kṛṣṇa spent his infancy ; but the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas assert that Mahāvana has got that distinction.

(87) Bhūteśvara—This is the name of Śiva, who is described as the presiding deity of Mathurā ; T 510, N 169. Rūpa Gosvāmin is silent about this deity.

(88) Vṛndāvana—L 187, V 862, 875, 899 ; *Padma* P. 4.69.9 ; 4.75. 8-14 ; 4.81.60 ; M 380-97, T 520. Cunningham identifies it with Klisoboras of

Arrian. Sanātana Gosvāmin used to worship the image of Madanamōhana at Vṛndāvana and a big temple was erected by some devotees for the deity. Dr. K. R. Qanungo holds that Guṇānanda, son of Rāmachandra Khan, a contemporary of Caitanya built this temple during the reign of Sher Shah.[17] An inscription found on the gate of the temple mentions the name of Guṇānanda, the son of Rāmachandra. The famous temple of Gōvinda was built by Rājā Mān Singh of Jaipur in 1590 A. D. The present site of Vṛndāvana was known to Lakṣmīdhara in the first quarter of the twelfth century. The Vaiṣṇavas believe that while Kṛṣṇa lived at Nandīśvara with his parents and Rādhā at Varṣānā, her father's house or at Yāvaṭa her mother-in-law's house, they used to meet at Vṛndāvaṇa during the night. But these places are situated at a distance of more than thirty miles from Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa used to go to Govardhana with the cattle every morning. But the distance between Govardhana and Nandīśvara is about 15 miles and that between Vṛndāvana some 20 miles. According to the *Mathurākhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* the Govardhana hill is situated in Vṛndāvana.[18] Rūpa Gosvāmin, therefore, comes to the conclusion that Vṛndāvana covers an area of 32 miles.[19]

The following places at Vṛndāvana are described as specially holy in mediaeval literature :

(89) Kālīya-hṛada L 192, V 876, R 881, M 413-21. T 515. The serpent Kālīya was suppressed here.

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17 *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, Vol. 45. pp 206-207.

18 *Mathurākhaṇḍa* quoted in *Mathurā-māhātmya* of Rūpa, 386.

19 *Ibid.* 390.

(90) Keśī*tīrtha*—V 875, M 412, R 885, T 515. The demon Keśī, who assumed the form of a horse, was killed here.

(91) Cīraghaṭṭa. R 8/84. The place where Kṛṣṇa stole the clothes of the Gopīs.

(92) Dvādaśāditya—V 875, M 422-23, 467, R 882.

The following holy places in the Mathurā region appear to have vanished from the face of the earth :

(93) Astamana—L 191.

(94) Iṣṭakāśrama—M 156.

(95) Karmāvarohana—L 190.

(96) Kundavana—V 861, 898.

(97) Puṣpa-sthala-V 157. 17, T 523.

(98) Prakīrtana—L 189.

(99) Praskandana—V 308, M 424-28. R 8/83.

(100) Vāyu*tīrtha*—V 856.

(101) Varuṇatīrtha—V 914.

(102) Vītānaka—L 190.

(103) Vinduprabhā—L 191.

(104) Vīrasthala—L 181, V 878, 891, T 523.

None of these 12 places is mentioned by Narahari in the first half of the eighteenth century ; nor are they to be found in the modern guide-books of Vraja.

The number of holy places is much larger in the Mathurā region in comparison to that of Dvārakā area. Lakṣmīdhara mentions only the following eight places in the latter on the basis of the *Varāha Purāṇa* :

Kādevaka, Pañcakuṇḍa, Pañcasara, Prabhāsa, Raivataka, Viṣṇucaṅkramana, Saṅgama-nagara and Sudharmā.[20] None of these places, excepting Prabhāsa and Raivataka exist at present.

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20 Lakṣmidhara-*Tirtha-vivecana*-kāṇḍa, pp. 225-227.

Chapter III

KṚṢṆA IN THE *MĀHĀBHĀRATA* AND THE *BHĀGAVATA*

The *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* describe the life of Kṛṣṇa from two different angles of vision. The former does not narrate those events in his life with which the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas are not directly or indirectly concerned. That is why some incidents in the early life of Kṛṣṇa are incidentally referred to at certain places in the *Mahābhārata*. We get occasional glimpses of his life at Dvārakā from some stray remarks of some persons. For example, Kṛṣṇa, according to the *Mahābhārata*, said in the *Rājasūya* assembly that Śiśupāla had set fire to Dvārakā when Kṛṣṇa had gone to Prāgjyotiṣapura, apparently to fight against Naraka.[1] But we do not get any account of this important event in the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Brahma Purāṇa* or the *Bhāgavata*. Conversely, the *Mahābhārata* merely alludes to the murder of Satrājit by Kṛtavarmā and Akrūra for the sake of the Syamantaka jewel.[2] But the above mentioned works furnish full account of the incident.

The *Bhāgavata* devotes 40 out of 90 Chapters and 1604 out of 3946 verses to Kṛṣṇa's life at Vṛndāvana and Gōkula. But it ignores practically the Kurukṣetra War excepting three incidents, namely, Balarāma's part in the duel between Bhīma and Duryōdhana, punishment of Aśvatthāmā and Bhīṣma's death. All these incidents are described in the very first book of the *Bhāgavata* with considerable variation from the epic story.

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1 *Mbh.* II. 42. 7.
2 *Ibid.* XVI. 3. 79.

As a matter of fact the *Bhāgavata* boldly contradicts the *Mahābhārata* almost at the very beginning of its narration. Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa is depicted here as dissatisfied with himself inspite of his austerities and expert knowledge of the Vedas. Nārada told him that he had distinguished *dharma* from *adharma* indeed in the *Mahābhārata* and other works but he had not described the glories of Vāsudeva adequately. He had done positive harm by advising people to undertake religious work for fulfilment of desires. He should now make amends by singing the high praises of devotion to Vāsudeva and his great achievement.[3] This shows the fundamental difference between the standpoints of the two great works.

The narration of circumstances under which the *Bhāgavata* came to be related to Parīkṣit further emphasises the distinctive features of the work. According to the *Mahābhārata*, Parīkṣit having been aware of the fact that he would die of snake-bite within a week, convened a council of his ministers devising ways and means for averting the calamity. He built up a palace, inaccessible to all people, even to air, and began to reside there surrounded by physicians and Brāhmaṇas expert in magical charms.[4] Like any other worldly person he is depicted here as anxious to save his own life. But in the *Bhāgavata* we find him welcoming his fate, as it would impel him to give up his attachment to worldly things. He went to the southern bank of the Ganges, where he sat on the *Kuśa* grass in the open. He observed fast and spent every single minute of his life on hearing the *Bhāgavata*.[5]

The *Mahābhārata* says that Parīkṣit was a still-born

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3 *Bh.*, I. V. 5-22
4 *Mbh.* I. 38. 28-29.
5 *Bh.* I. 19.

child. Kṛṣṇa, however, said that the child would have a long life and would protect the world for sixty years.[6] The boy, according to the *Mahābhārata*, was called Parīkṣit because he was born at a time when the Pāṇḍava family had become extremely worn off.[7] But the *Bhāgavata* states that Parīkṣit saw in the womb that he was saved by a dark-coloured effulgent person. He was not born dead. Whenever he saw any person he asked himself whether he was the same person who had saved him. This sort of examination made him known as Parīkṣit.[8]

In the *Mahābhārata*, Vidura is described as giving up his life sixteen years after the Bhārata War. Dhṛtarāṣṭra lived with the Pāṇḍavas for fifteen years after the death of his sons.[9] Then he along with Gāndhārī and Kuntī went to the hermitage.[10] Yudhiṣṭhira went to see them after about a year. He enquired about Vidura. But at that time Vidura leaned on a neighbouring tree and allowed the vitality of his bodily parts and senses to merge into that of Yudhiṣṭhira.[11] The *Bhāgavata*, however, keeps Vidura alive even after the death of Kṛṣṇa, which event took place thirtysix years after the Bhārata War. It relates how Vidura went out on pilgrimage and on his return met Yudhiṣṭhira but, even on being definitely asked about Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas, did not mention the destruction of the race of Yadu.[12] This event is described with greater wealth of details in the reply given by

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6 *Mbh.* X. 16. 8. and 14.
7 *Mbh.* X. 16. 3.
8 *Bh.* I. 12. 29.
9 *Mbh.* XV. 4. 12.
10 *Ibid.* XV. 23. 19
11 *Ibid.* XV. 33. 32.
12 *Bh.* I. 13. 12.

Uddhava to the query of Vidura about the welfare of Kṛṣṇa and his friends. Uddhava told him with tearful eyes that Kṛṣṇa had disappeared from the world.[13]

The *Bhāgavata* consists of dialogues between six pairs of interrogators and narrators—Brahmā replied to the questions of Nārada[14], Nārada instructed Vyāsa[15], Vyāsa taught Śuka, Vidura learnt much from Maitreya[16], Śuka narrated the *Bhāgavata* to Parīkṣit[17] and lastly Sūta to the sages headed by Śaunaka.[18] In the case of half of them, namely Vyāsa, Vidura and Parīkṣit, the description given in the *Mahābhārata* differs materially from that furnished by the *Bhāgavata*.

The episode of the death of Bhīṣma is described in the *Bhāgavata* in a dramatic way. In the *Anuśāsanaparva* we find Bhīṣma referring to the destruction of heroes in a tone of regret. He blames Duryōdhana for rejecting the advice he tendered to him. He praises Kṛṣṇa as the God of Gods, and asks his permission to give up his life. In the *Bhāgavata*, Bhīṣma is depicted as thoroughly reconciled to the events that had taken place. Addressing Yudhiṣṭhira he says : "No man can ever discover the intentions of Kṛṣṇa ; even seers get bewildered in their seeking to find them out. Therefore, knowing it for certain that all these events depend on the will of the Providence, one should resign himself to it.[19]" He then extols Kṛṣṇa as the soul of the universe, who looks upon all with the same eye.

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13 *Bh.* III. 2. 7.
14 *Bh.* II. 4.
15 *Bh.* I. 5.
16 *Bh.* II. 10 and III. 2.
17 *Bh.* I. 19
18 *Bh.* I. 1.
19 *Bh.* I. 9. 16-17

The implication is that he had no hatred for the Kauravas. Bhīṣma, however, thanks his lot that Kṛṣṇa broke his own vow of not taking up arms in the Bhārata War for fulfilling the wishes of him, his devotee. He considers it a great grace indeed that the Lord is present in his body before him. He recalls blissfully that the Gopīs had the signal honour of enjoying the sight of his charming gait, graceful movements, winsome smiles and amorous glances and having imitated his plays, attained identity with Him.[20] The *Mahābhārata* does not make any reference to the Gopīs anywhere at all.

The difference in the outlook of the two books is clearly brought out by the narration of the part played by Balarāma in the Bhārata War. The *Mahābhārata* states that when the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas were collecting their armies Balarāma had requested Kṛṣṇa to side with the former. But as Kṛṣṇa could not accede to his request, Balarāma became angry with him and set out on a pilgrimage to the Sarasvatī-tīrtha with a host of Yādavas. Kṛtavarmā of the Bhoja family joined the Kauravas and Kṛṣṇa and Sātyaki took up the cause of the Pāṇḍavas. In the Himalayas Balarāma learnt from Nārada the tragic tale of destruction of the heroes of both the parties. On the forty-second day after the date of his starting—he started on the Puṣya-star day when the Bhārata War began and he came back to Kurukṣetra on the Śravana star, to witness the mace-encounter between Bhīma and Duryōdhana, both of whom had learnt the art of fighting with mace from him. Balarāma is depicted here as a spectator interested in seeing the duel. Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna that, though Bhīma was stronger than Duryōdhana, the

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20 *Bh.* 1. IX. 40

latter was more astute and better trained.[21] It was, therefore, impossible for Bhīma to win the contest by fair means. He urged that Bhīma should now keep up his promise of breaking the thigh of Duryōdhana. Taking the cue from him Arjuna slapped his thigh and thereby indicated to Bhīma where to strike. Bhīma followed this advice and ultimately overcame Duryōdhana. But Balarāma flared up and denounced the unjust conduct of Bhīma in hitting below the navel. In great anger did he take up his plough and rushed towards Bhīma, but Vāsudeva restrained him with both his arms. Kṛṣṇa argued that Bhīma had done nothing wrong in keeping up his promise of breaking the thigh of Duryōdhana. Moreover, as the Pāṇḍavas were the sons of their father's sister their prosperity would mean the prosperity of the Yādavas. But Baladeva was not at all convinced by these diplomatic arguments. He solemnly declared that, as Bhīma had taken recourse to unfair fighting in defeating Duryōdhana, he would gain notoriety as an unjust warrior ; but the pious Duryōdhana would attain fame in this world as a straight fighter and go to the eternal way.[22]

Curiously enough the *Bhāgavata* is entirely silent over the difference of opinion between Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma regarding the espousing of the cause of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. It merely states that Baladeva wanted to remain neutral in the war and therefore went out on pilgrimage.[23] His pilgrimage covered not only northern India but also the south including the Veṇkaṭa hill, Kāñchī, Srīraṅgam, Mādurā, Rāmeshwaram, Kṛṭamālā and Tāmparṇi and Cape Comorin. According to the *Bhāgavata*

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21 *Mbh*. IX. 5. 3.
22 *Mbh*. IX. 59. 23-24.
23 *Bh*. X. 78.

Balarāma came to know of the Bhārata War from the talk of the Brāhmaṇas at Prabhāsa, and not from Nārada in the Himalayas as related in the *Mahābhārata*. He went to Kurukṣetra while Bhīma and Duryōdhana were engaged in the mace-encounter. He tried to dissuade them from fighting by addressing them as follows : "Both of you have got equal strength ; both are equally brave ; I consider *one as dearer than life to me* but the other is superior in training ; it does not seem, therefore, posssible for either of you to be victorious. You desist from this fruitless duel." But the two fighters remembered only their enmity and did not pay any heed to the counsel offered by Balarāma. The latter, therefore, said in despair that the fruits of deeds of the past are more powerful than anything else and went back to Dvārakā. Here the *Bhagāvata* maintains a studied silence over the hint given by Kṛṣṇa for taking recourse to unjust warfare.

The *Bhāgavata* relates how Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, ravished Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of Duryōdhana, from the Svayamvara Sabhā.[24] The Kauravas captured Sāmba and made him their prisoner. Balarāma went to them and demanded in the name of Ugrasena the release of Sāmba. The Kauravas, however, hurled heaps of abuses on the Yādavas and refused to give up the captive. At this Balarāma took up his plough, upturned the city of Hastinā and proceeded to throw it into the Ganges. Now the Kauravas were brought to their senses. They prayed to Balarāma for sparing them. Peace was established. Duryōdhana gave plenty of dowry for his daughter. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Brahma Purāṇa* also relate the same story.[25] Here we find that the Kauravas claimed homage from the Kukura

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24 *Bh.* X. 68.

25 *Viṣṇu* P. V. 35 ; *Brahma Purāṇa* 99. 4-35

and Andhaka tribes. At this Balarāma said, "Ugrasena shall be the undisputed king of kings ; for I will not return to his capital until I have rid the world wholly of the sons of Kuru." He threatened to destroy not only Duryōdhana, Bhīṣma and their supporters but also those of Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers. The *Mahābhārata*, however, does not know of any daughter of Duryōdhana by the name of Lakṣmaṇā. He had a son, indeed, called Lakṣmaṇa. An apocryphal verse printed in the Calcutta edition of the *Mahābhārata* mentions an *Apsarā* named Lakṣmaṇā, who danced at the time of the birth of Arjuna.[26] The *Harivaṁśa*, too, does not mention of any matrimonial relation between Duryōdhana and Kṛṣṇa. The tradition, recorded in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* can not be lightly set aside. We must, therefore, recognise that besides the *Mahābhārata*, other traditions regarding the Yādavas and Kauravas were also current.

The punishment of Aśvatthāmā for murdering secretly the sons of Draupadī at night has been related in different ways in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata*. The epic states that, on hearing of the murder of her sons Draupadī told Yudhiṣṭhira that she would give up her life by hunger-strike if Aśvatthāmā be not killed on that very day.[27] When Yudhiṣṭhira pleaded that Aśvatthāmā had fled to an inaccessible forest, and it was not possible to kill him in course of the day, she appealed to Bhīma, who at once pursued Aśvatthāmā. While Aśvatthāmā was hiding himself on the bank of the Ganges in the neighbourhood of Vyāsa and other sages, Bhīma arrived there and proceeded to kill him. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna who had followed Bhīma closely restrained him. Aśvatthāmā then lodged the highly

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26 *Mbh.* (Cal. Ed). I. 123. 488.

27 *Mbh.* X. 11. 20.

destructive *Brahmaśiras* weapon in an *Iṣikā* reed with the words "for the total destruction of the Pāṇḍavas." Kṛṣṇa also encouraged Arjuna to throw the same deadly *Brahmaśiras* weapon. The sages knew that the region in which the weapon would be thrown would be without rains continuously for twelve years. Vyāsa and Nārada, therefore, requested Arjuna and Aśvatthāmā to restrain the weapon. Arjuna recalled it but Aśvatthāmā did not know how to do so. Vyāsa now intervened and effected a compromise between the hostile parties. He permitted Aśvatthāmā to let the weapon fall upon the embryos but Aśvatthāmā could save his life only on condition of ceding the head jewel, which had the virtue of protecting its wearer from hunger and all sorts of danger. Kṛṣṇa with the consent of Vyāsa decreed that the unborn son of Uttarā should be born dead, but would be called to life by his grace. He cursed Aśvatthāmā with a wandering life in the wilderness oppressed by foul diseases for three thousand years.[28]

The *Bhāgavata* depicts Draupadī as a noble forgiving lady. Here it is Arjuna who pursues Aśvatthāmā and brings him to the camp of the Pāṇḍavas as a captive animal. On seeing this wretched condition of the murderer of her sons Draupadī said; "Let him be freed, let him be released, a *Brāhmaṇa* that he is and also the son of your Guru, Droṇa." Bhīma, however, indignantly said that the wicked man deserved nothing but death. On hearing this Kṛṣṇa said; "Even a fallen *Brāhmaṇa* ought not to be slain and a ruffian surely deserves to be killed. Both these precepts have been taught by me in the scriptures. Therefore, carry out both these commands of mine."[29] He implied

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28 *Ibid.* X. 16. 8-10.

29 *Bh.* I. 7. 52.

that the gem on Aśvatthāmā's head should be cut off with the sword.

The destruction of Jarāsandha is one of the most important achievements of Kṛṣṇa. The Jaina *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, written by Jinasena in 783 A.D. records the tradition that Kṛṣṇa himself killed Jarāsandha with his disc. It relates that the Yādavas fled away from Mathurā out of fear for Jarāsandha, who while pursuing them was told by an old woman that they had all committed themselves to the flames of the funeral pyre, as no body dared to give them asylum against the all-powerful sovereign of Magadha. Jarāsandha, therefore, went back to his own capital. Meanwhile the Yādavas marched to Dvārakā and built a strongly fortified city there.[30] Jarāsandha came to know of their prosperity in the western city long afterwards. He sent a messenger to them claiming no tribute but mere homage. Kṛṣṇa, however, told him that as he himself was the *Chakravartī* or paramount sovereign, Jarāsandha should render homage to him. At this, fight ensued between them and Kṛṣṇa cut off the shoulder of Jarāsandha with his powerful disc.[31]

From a description of the prowess and allies of Jarāsandha, according to the *Mahābhārata*, as reported by Kṛṣṇa before Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, it appears that the King of Magadha had made all preparations for proclaiming himself as the paramount sovereign of India. The powerful King, Śiśupāla placed himself under his protection and accepted the position of the Commander-in-Chief under him. Haṃsa and Ḍimbaka were his two other generals. Besides, Dantāvakra, Karūṣa and Kārava, the Yavana King of the West, probably the same as Kāla Yavana, and

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30 Jaina *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, Ch. 40.

31 *Ibid*, 52. 83.

Bhagadatta of Assam were his subordinate allies. Yudhiṣṭhira's maternal uncle Purujit and Kṛṣṇa's father-in-law, Bhīṣmaka, were also servitors to the King of Magadha. Kṛṣṇa further informed Yudhiṣṭhira : "The eighteen tribes of the Bhojas, from the fear of Jarāsandha, have fled to the west ; so also have fled the Surasenas, the Bhadrakas, the Voḍhas, the Salvas, the Paṭaccaras, the Susthalas, the Sukuṭṭas, the Kulindas and the Kuntīs."[32] He reiterated again : "By defeating all the kings one after the other and their soldiers, he has brought them all as prisoners to his city ; and he has thus daily swelled the crowd (of kings). O Great King, we too from the fear of Jarāsandha left Mathurā and fled to the city of Dvārāvatī."[33] There is no reference in the *Mahābhārata* to the siege of Mathurā by Jarāsandha, nor to any long drawn conflict between him and the Yādavas. Jarāsandha, on the other hand, could not recognise Kṛṣṇa, when the latter went to his palace at Girivraja in the company of Bhīma and Arjuna, and told him, "I do not recollect when I have ever done you any injury. After careful recollection, I cannot recollect the injury I have done you."[34]

The tradition recorded in the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata*, however, relates that Jarāsandha, being entreated by his widowed daughters, once besieged Mathura with a huge army and led seventeen other expeditions against Kṛṣṇa and his family. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[35] and the *Bhāgavata*[36] state that Jarāsandha attacked Mathura with 23 *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers, that is, 5 *akṣauhiṇīs* more

32 *Mbh.* II. 14. 25-28.
33 *Ibid.* II. 14. 66-67.
34 *Ibid.* II. 22. 1.
35 *Viṣṇu* P., V. 22. 3.
36 *Bh.* X. 50. 4.

than the combined forces of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas fighting the Bhārata War. The former merely relates that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sallied from the town with a slender but resolute force and discomfited the King of Magadha and his hosts.[37] The *Bhāgavata*, however, elaborating the theme says that Balarāma grasped Jarāsandha like a lion getting hold of another by its prowess, threw him off his car and bound him with human and *Vāruṇī* nooses. Govinda, released Jarāsandha, who became so much ashamed of his defeat that he decided to spend the rest of his days on devout penances. His allies comforted him by saying, "Thy defeat from the Yādavas is consequent upon the fetters of thy own actions." The *Bhāgavata* devotes five verses to describe the reception which was accorded to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on their victory by the citizens of Mathurā.[38]

The *Harivaṁśa* specifically mentions the names of the allies of Jarāsandha accompanying him to besiege Mathurā. These were Dantāvakra, the ruler of Karūṣa, the kings of Chedis (Śiśupāla), Kaliṅga and Pauṇḍra (Vāsudeva), Bhīṣmaka and his son Rukmī, Veṇudāri, Śrutarvā, Kratha, Aṃśumāna, rulers of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kośala, Kāśī, Daśārṇa, Suhma, Videha, Madra, Trigarta, Sauvīra, Pāṇḍya, Gāndhāra. Kāshmīra and Darada, the King of the Yavanas, Bhagadatta (King of Assam) and Duryōdhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Mathurā is described here as full of food and fuel.[39] A few more names of allies are mentioned in the next chapter, while Jarāsandha allocates special duties for them. We find among them Drupada, the ruler of Pañchāla, Vinda and Anuvinda of Mālava, King Virāṭa,

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37 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 22. 8.
38 *Bh.* X. 50. 34-40.
39 *HV.* II. 34. 13-22.

Ekalavya, Jayadratha, Śalya and others. Jarāsandha directed them not only to besiege the city but also to level it down and flood it with water. A long and graphic description of the war is given in two chapters of the *Harivaṁśa*. It says that Jarāsandha and his allies were completely defeated and they fled away. The Yādavas did not pursue them. The *Mahābhārata* relates that Bṛhadratha, the father of Jarāsandha, had three *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers[40]; But the *Harivaṁśa* states that Jarāsandha had twenty *akṣauhiṇīs*[41] and that the Vṛṣṇis being much inferior in number were overpowered (*abhibhūtaḥ*) which is interpreted by Nīlakaṇṭha, as surrounded. The last verse, however, speaks of the victory of the Vṛṣṇis over the King of Magadha.[42] But the subsequent chapters describe how it was decided in the Yādava council that it would be better for them to shift to western India.[43] On their way to Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa tells Paraśurāma how he and Balarāma were reared up at Vraja on account of the fear of Kaṃsa. "When we attained youth, we came to Mathurā, killed Kaṁsa and having placed his father Ugrasena, reverted to our original occupation of tending cows. Jarāsandha made wars on us many times. We had to come away on foot because we have got neither wealth, nor soldiers or arms and chariots on account of fear for the enterprise of Jarāsandha."[44] These are highly significant admissions which substantially modify but do not nullify the statements made in the previous chapters.

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40 *Mbh.* II. 17. 13.

41 *HV.* II. 36. 38.

*An *akṣauhiṇi* consisted of 21,890 chariots, 65670 horses and 1,09,450 infantry.

42 *HV.* II. 36. 40.

43 *Ibid.* II. 39. 5.

44 *HV.* II. 40. 37-42.

The *Harivaṁśa* is traditionally regarded as supplement to the *Mahābhārata*. A great western scholar like W. Ruben holds that it is the oldest *Purāṇa* and that the *Brahma Purāṇa* is a copy of the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is a younger version of the original *Brahma Purāṇa*.[45] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* omit all such references to the humilitation of Kṛṣṇa. These two *Purāṇas* state that when Kṛṣṇa found the mighty Kāla Yavana coming to attack Mathurā he considered it prudent to send his relatives to Dvārakā lest they should be harassed simultaneouly by Jarāsandha and Kāla Yavana. He stayed behind, beguiled Kāla Yavana to the cave where Muchukunda was enjoying his age-long sleep and got him reduced to ashes through the latter.[46]

The *Mahābhārata* does not relate how Kṛṣṇa got Kāla Yavana killed. It only refers in a single verse to Kāla Yavana as born of the sage Garga.[47] The *Brahma Purāṇa* relates that Vakadevī, one of the wives of Vasudeva, was a daughter of the King of the Tṛigartas. The priest of this King was Garga, who begot the famous Kāla Yavana. The *Harivaṁśa* states that Garga begot Kāla Yavana on an *Apsarā* named Gopālī, and that he was reared up by the Yavana King.[48] It further relates that Jarāsandha sent Śālva to induce Kāla Yavana to help him in destroying Kṛṣṇa, who had been oppressing the world.[49] Jarāsandha commissioned Śālva to tell Kāla Yavana how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were surrounded on all sides by his armies on

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45 *J. R. A. S.*, 1941, pp. 247 ff.

46 *Viṣṇu P.*, V. 23 ; Bh. X. 50-51

47 *Mbh.* XII. 340,

48 *HV.* II. 57. 7-14. The Jaina *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* (Ch.18.24) says that Kāla Yavana was a son of Jarāsandha,

49 *HV.* II. 53. 26,

the Gomanta hill, which was set on fire and yet they jumped up on them and created havoc.[50] The *Harivaṁśa* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* do not recount the final defeat of Jarāsandha and his death at the hands of Bhīma apparently because this incident had been detailed in the *Mahābhārata*. But the *Bhāgavata* reiterates it with some additions and alterations. It relates how the kings who were oppressed by Jarāsandha were twenty thousand in number and how they sent a messenger to Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā invoking his aid.[51] The number is stated in a subsequent Chapter to be 20800.[52] But the *Mahābhārata* states that Jarāsandha had made 86 kings captive and that he was waiting for the capture of 14 more so that he might sacrifice one hundred kings at a time.[53] When Kṛṣṇa went to Rājagṛha with Bhīma and Arjuna, Jarāsandha, according to the *Bhāgavata*, seemed to have recognised that he had seen them before.[54] In the *Mahābhārata*, however, we find that he took them to be absolute strangers.[55] Jarāsandha is depicted in the epic as intensely devoted to the *Snātaka* Brāhmaṇas. The *Bhāgavata* reports that Jarāsandha was ready to sacrifice his very life for the sake of Brāhmaṇas. When Kṛṣṇa told him who they really were, Jarāsandha said: "I shall not fight with thy coward self, for, in the matters of fighting thou lose your heart. Deserting thy own town of Mathurā thou hast taken refuge in the bottom of the deep ocean."[56] While he was fighting with Bhīma, Kṛṣṇa took a twig of a tree in his hand

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50 *HV*. II. 53. 37.
51 *Bh*. X. 70. 24.
52 *Ibid*. X. 73. 1.
53 *Mbh*. II. 14. 19.
54 *Bh*. *X*. 72. 22.
55 *Mbh*. II. 20. 1.
56 *Bh*. X. 70. 31.

and tore it into two halves, thereby indicating how to effect the death of Jarāsandha. Balarāma was not present there to pronounce on the justifiability of such a mode of fighting.

According to the *Mahābhārata*, the Pāṇḍavas went out on *Digvijaya* after the destruction of Jarāsandha. But the *Bhāgavata* relates that first of all Sahadeva subjugated the kings of the South, Nakula those of the West, Arjuna defeated the Northern and Bhīma the Eastern princes and brought immense wealth as tribute; but Yudhiṣṭhira became very much worried on hearing that Jarāsandha was still unconquered.[57] Now Kṛṣṇa divulged to him the plan for defeating Jarāsandha in a duel encounter. The author of the *Bhāgavata* was, no doubt, a person of great spiritual attainments, and he was entirely innocent of politics. He did not know that Jarāsandha had built up a strong axis of powers and, therefore, his allies like Śiśupāla, Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva, Śālva, Bhīṣmaka[58] would not have acknowledged the supremacy of Yudhiṣṭhira so long as the Magadhan overlord was alive.

The *Bhāgavata* in its narration of Kṛṣṇa's life at Dvārakā has disregarded the chronological order of events as described in the *Mahābhārata*. The burning of the Khāṇḍava forest took place, according to the *Mahābhārata*, long after the marriage of Subhadrā with Arjuna. Ravishment of Subhadrā and the birth of Abhimanyu are described in Chapters preceding the narration of the burning up of the Khāṇḍava forest. But the *Bhāgavata* refers to the burning up of the Khāṇḍava in Chapter 58, while the ravishing of Subhadrā is narrated almost towards the end of the tenth book.[59] Immediately after describing the marriage

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57 *Bh.* X. 72. 13-15.
58 *Mbh.* II. 13. 10-25.
59 *Bh.* X. 58. 25. and X. 86. 2-11.

of Rukmiṇī with Kṛṣṇa, the *Bhāgavata* proceeds to describe the birth and marriage of her son, Pradyumna.[60] Then it reverts to the marriage of Kṛṣṇa with Jāmbavatī and others.[61] This is followed by a description of the marriage of Pradyumna with Rukmī's daughter and the killing of Rukmī by Balarāma. The arrangement of the *Bhāgavata* is topical and not chronological. Taking up the topic of marriage the author has disposed of the marriage of three generations, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha at a time.[62] After describing the marriages the *Bhāgavata* narrates the destruction of the enemies of Kṛṣṇa. The narration of events leading to the death of Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva[63], Dvivida[64], Jarāsandha[65], Śiśupāla[66], Śālva[67] and Dantavakra[68] is taken up successively.

According to the *Mahābhārata* Rukmī, Dantavakra and Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva survived Jarāsandha and Śiśupāla at least by thirteen years. Śiśupāla died at the time of the *Rājasūya* ceremony. The Pāṇḍavas then lost their kingdom at the dice-play. They lived in the forest for twelve years and stayed at Virāṭa's court *incognito* for 1 year. When the negotiations for a peaceful settlement failed, preparations were made for the war. At the time Drupada is reported to have requested the Pāṇḍavas to send emissaries to Dantavakra, Rukmī and Pauṇḍra.[69] The *Bhāgavata* says

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60 *Bh.* X. 54 and 55.
61 *Ibid.* X. 56-59.
62 *Ibid.* X. 59-63.
63 *Ibid.* X. 66.
64 *Ibid.* X. 67.
65 *Ibid.* X. 73.
66 *Ibid.* X. 74,
67 *Ibid.* X. 76-77.
68 *Ibid.* X. 78.
69 *Mbh.* V. 4. 22

that Dantavakra attacked Kṛṣṇa single-handed with a view to avenging the death of Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka.[70] It does not specify either the date or the place of the fighting. The *Mahābhārata* relates the Śālva was present at the *Rājasūya* ceremony.[71] Śālva must have been killed within a few months after this, because Kṛṣṇa hastened to meet the Pāṇḍavas in their forest retreat and regretted his absence at the time of the dice-play. He emphasised the fact that had he been present during the play he would not have allowed the insulting of Draupadī. He explained that he had gone to Ānarta to destroy the Saubha city belonging to Śālva and had come to the forest after having accomplished his purpose.[72] Arjuna complimented Kṛṣṇa on his killing of Śālva.[73]

According to the *Harivaṁśa* the enmity between Dantavakra and Kṛṣṇa was of long standing. He related how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had fled to the Gomanta hill when he had invaded Mathurā. He was a skilled warrior and older than the two brothers, who had not yet attained youth and yet he was defeated by them.[74] But at the time of Rukmiṇī's *Svayamvara* he advised Jarāsandha and his allies to make peace with Kṛṣṇa and to render to him due honour and hospitality.[75] Śālva, however, did not agree with him. In any case, Dantavakra, according to the *Mahābhārata*, was alive when preparations were being made for the Bhārata War, while Śālva died in the very first year of the exile of the Pāṇḍavas.

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70 *Bh.* X. 78. 1-9.
71 *Mbh.* II. 31. 9-20.
72 *Mbh.* III. 14 and III. 15. 2.
73 *Ibid.* III. 13. 29.
74 *HV.* II. 49. 13.
75 *Ibid.* II. 49. 19-23.

Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva was, according to the *Mahābhārata*, defeated by Bhīma in course of his *Digvijaya* on the eve of the *Rājasūya*.[76] He is described as one of the kings who attended the ceremony.[77] . We do not find him taking any part in the Bhārata War, though Drupada advised the Pāṇḍavas to send an envoy to him when preparations were being made for the War.[78] He must have been killed on the eve of the Bhārata War. Was it a part of the strategy of Kṛṣṇa to liquidate the erst-while allies of Jarāsandha like Dantavakra and Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva before the commencement of the Bhārata War? All our source-books, however, are silent about the exact period when Kṛṣṇa accomplished these tasks. The *Uttarakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*, as we have seen, states that Kṛṣṇa spent two months at Vraja after the death of Dantavakra. Was it a suitable time for enjoying the company of the friends of his adolescent period when the whole of India was on the point of being consumed by the huge conflagration of the war? Did the fight with Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva take place before or after his fight with Dantavakra? According to the sequence of narration in the *Bhāgavata* it preceded the latter. But much reliance can not be placed on such sequence, because the destruction of Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva have been described even before the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, at which Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva is known from the *Mahābhārata*, to have been present.

The *Harivaṁśa* is the only source book to reveal that Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva's claim to the name of Vāsudeva, is a genuine one. One Pauṇḍra is described as being born of Vasudeva and his wife Sutanu and it is further stated

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76 *Mbh.* II. 27. 20.
77 *Ibid.* II. 31. 10.
78 *Ibid.* V. 4. 22.

that he became a King.[79] This leads one to think that Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva is being referred to here. But the apocryphal portion of the *Bhaviṣyaparvan* which devotes as many as twelve chapters to the description of rivalry of Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva with Kṛṣṇa does not specifically state it.[80] In the *Mahābhārata* we find Kṛṣṇa referring to Pauṇḍra as the King of Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Kirātas. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that this Vāsudeva, was usually called Pauṇḍraka, which according to Nīlakaṇṭha meant the King of Puṇḍra.[81] The *Bhāgavata*, however, describes him as the King of Karūṣa[82] though the *Harivaṁśa* states that Dantāvakra was the ruler of Karūṣa.[83] The *Padma Purāṇa* calls him the King of Kāśī[84], but the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[85] and the *Bhāgavata*[86] make the King of Kāśī an ally of Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva. The quarrel between the two Vāsudevas was much more political than religious in character. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Pauṇḍraka sent an envoy to Kṛṣṇa with the following message : "Relinquish thou foolish fellow, the discus ; lay aside all my insignia, my name, and the character of Vāsudeva ; and come and do me homage ; and I will vouchsafe thee means of subsistence." Kṛṣṇa sent a derisive reply and made preparations for going out on an expedition against him. Meanwhile the King of

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79 *HV.* 103. 25-26.

80(a) *HV. Bhaviṣyaparvan.* Chs. 91 to 102, These chapters have neither been commented upon by Nilakaṇṭha nor translated by M. Langlois, though the Asiatic Society edition contains these.

80(b) *Mbh.* II. 13. 19.

81 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa V.* 34. 27 ; *Mbh.* II. 2. 12.

82 *Bh.* X. 66. 1.

83 *HV.* I. 34. 24.

84 *Padma, Uttarakhaṇḍa.* 251. 1.

85 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa,* V. 34. 14.

86 *Bh.* X. 66. 12.

Kāśī having heard of Kṛṣṇa's efforts marched forward with his own troops and those of his friend Pauṇḍraka tried to forestall Kṛṣṇa. Pauṇḍraka was seen at a distance by Kṛṣṇa dressed exactly like himself, holding discus, a club, a mace, scimitar, and a lotus in his hands. Pauṇḍraka was dressed in yellow garments, and was wearing a garland of flowers and he had also the *Śrīvatsa* mark delineated on his chest.[87] There are similarity between the two in dress, weapons and ornaments, but the Pauṇḍraka did not claim divinity or homage and worship from any body on account of his alleged Godhood. We do not find the slightest indication of any doctrinal difference between the two. As a matter of fact, according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Pauṇḍraka did not bother himself with the religious aspect of the question at all. The *Bhāgavata*, however, definitely states that the ignorant people flattered Pauṇḍraka with adulation, importing that he was God Himself descended on the earth and he too came to consider himself as such. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* goes a step further. Here he claims to be Śiva and the husband of Lakṣmī. But the *Purāṇas* call him derisively a jackal.[88(a)] He sent an envoy to Dvārakā claiming that he had appeared as an incarnation out of a sense of pity for the living creatures and asking Kṛṣṇa either to forego his emblems or to fight against him.[88(b)] The *Bhāgavata* vouchsafes the information that Pauṇḍra marched with two *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers whereas his friend, the King of Kaśī took three *akṣauhiṇīs*. Neither the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, nor the *Bhāgavata* indicates the place where the battle took place. It must have occurred at some place between Kāśī and Dvārakā. Both the authorities

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87 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 34. 16-18.

88(a) *Brahma-Vaivarta P.*, *Kṛṣṇajanma Kh*, Ch. 121.

88(b) *Bh.* X. 66. 5-6.

hold that Kṛṣṇa killed Pauṇḍraka without the slightest difficulty. The *Padma Purāṇa* says that Pauṇḍraka went to Dvārakā to fight against Kṛṣṇa. When his son came to learn of his death he performed the Maheśvara sacrifice, as a result of which he secured a boon enabling him to burn down Kṛṣṇa along with his sons, wives and relatives. Seeing the terrible fire coming to engulf them, the people of Dvārakā prayed to Kṛṣṇa for safety. The boon proved ineffective and Kṛṣṇa burnt down Kāśī.[89] The burning of Vārāṇasī is also described in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[90] and the *Bhāgavata*.[91]

Another enemy, killed by Kṛṣṇa on the eve of the Bhārata War was Dvivida, the chief of a tribe with the totem of monkey. The *Mahābhārata* says that Mainda and Dvivida were the rulers of Kiṣkindhyā when Sahadeva went out on conquering expedition before the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. Sahadeva fought against them for seven days but could not overpower them. But they willingly gave some gifts and persuaded Sahadeva to depart from their kingdom.[92] When negotiations were being carried on for a peaceful settlement of disputes between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, Vidura related that the monkey king hurled stones at Kṛṣṇa at the gate of city of Saubha[93]. He did not say that Kṛṣṇa killed him. The reference to Saubha indicates that Dvivida must have gone there to fight on behalf of Śālva against Kṛṣṇa. The *Harivaṁśa* states that the powerful monkeys Mainda and Dvivida were defeated by Kṛṣṇa at the battle.[94] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* informs us

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89 *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttarkhaṇḍa*, Ch. 251. 8.27.
90 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* V. 34. 42-43.
91 *Bh.* X. 66. 41.
92 *Mbh.* II. 28.
93 *Ibid.* V. 128. 41.
94 *HV.* II. 115. 20-21.

that Dvivida was a staunch friend of Naraka whose death he promised to avenge. He could assume any shape he liked. One day while Balarāma was drinking in the groves of Raivataka along with his wife and other damsels, Dvivida appeared there and stole his ploughshare and the club and broke the cups filled with wine. Balarāma killed him.[95] The *Bhāgavata* says that Dvivida was the brother of Mainda and friend of Naraka. He set fire to villages, towns, and settlements of cowherds with a view to avenging the death of Naraka. He inflicted severe damage on the country of Ānarta, in which Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of his friend, lived. The rest of the description relating to his fight with Baladeva tallies with that of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* though much greater emphasis is laid on his monkeyish conduct.[96] The way in which the event of Dvivida's death has been narrated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* gives an impression that it took place soon after the death of Naraka. The *Mahābhārata*, however, does not warrant such a conclusion.

According to the *Mahābhārata*, Bhagadatta, the son of Naraka, was the king of Prāgjyōtiṣapura at the time of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice.[97] The killing of the Naraka by Kṛṣṇa is referred to at several places in the epic.[98] This event must have taken place some time before the *Rājasūya*. There is no description of the fight of Kṛṣṇa with Naraka in the *Mahābhārata*. It is only related that Kṛṣṇa having defeated and killed Naraka took away sixteen thousand women and various jewels.[99] The number increases to 16100 in the *Harivaṁśa* which takes care to describe them

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95 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 36. 2-19.
96 *Bh.* X. 67. 2-25.
97 *Mbh.* II. 31. 9
98 *Ibid.* III. 13. 29. ; V. 128. 42.
99 *Mbh.* V. 155. 9.

as '*Ekaveṇīdharāḥ*' wearing only one braid of hair and '*Satīmārga-manuvratāḥ*' devoted to the path of chastity.[100] Nīlakaṇṭha explains the former term as *Kumārīkāḥ* or unmarried girls. But in the next chapter they are described as the wives and daughters of the chiefs of Gandharvas and Asuras.[101] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* takes care to mention that they were all maidens of gods, saints, demons and kings.[102] The *Bhāgavata* says that they were 16000 in number. They all became charmed on seeing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa and desired to have him as their husband.[103] Kṛṣṇa sent them to Dvārakā and married all of them at a time assuming 16000 forms.[104] These ladies were married to Kṛṣṇa before the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. None of them could have been below the age of fourteen at that time. The Bhārata War took place fourteen years after the *Rājasūya* ceremony and Kṛṣṇa lived for thirty-six years after the War. All these ladies, therefore, were at least sixty-four years of age at the time of the demise of Krsna. The *Mahābhārata* states that when Arjuna was escorting the widows of Dvārakā to Hastināpur many of them were forcibly taken away by the Ābhīra robbers but some went with them wilfully on account of passion.[105(a)] Did any of these latter belong to the group of 16100 ladies carried away by Kṛṣṇa from Prāgjyotiṣapura ? Could any passion remain in them even at the age of 64 ? But the *Brahma Purāṇa* definitely

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100 *HV.* II. 63. 13.

101 *Ibid.* II. 64. 24, The *Adi parvan* of the *Mlh.* (62. 155-56) says that the *Apsarās* taking their birth at the orders of Indra became the 16000 wives of Kṛṣṇa.

102 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 29. 9.

103 *Bh.* X. 59. 34-35.

104 *Ibid.* X. 59. 42.

105(a) *Mbh.* XVI. 8. 57. '*Kāmāccanyāḥ Pravaryayuḥ*'

mentions that the abducted women were the wives of Kṛṣṇa.[105(b)]

Leaving aside these ladies Kṛṣṇa is said to have got eight principal wives. The *Mahābhārata* mentions the names of Rukmiṇī,[106] Satyabhāmā[107] and Jāmbavatī[108] only. The *Bhāgavata* gives the names of the eight queens as Rukmiṇī, Satyā, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kālindī, Mitravindā, Śaivyā and Nāgnajiti.[109] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* does not mention the names of Bhadrā and Śaivyā, but adds those of Rōhiṇī and Mādrī.[110] The list given in both the places contains nine instead of eight names. Śrīdhara Svāmīn, the commentator, tries to explain it away by identifying Rōhiṇī with Jāmbavatī. But in the 32nd Chapter of the same *Purāṇa* Sāmba has been put as the son of Jāmbavatī, while Dīptimat and Tāmrapakṣī are described as the sons of Rōhiṇī.[111] Sanātana Gosvāmī says, on what authority we do not know, that Rōhiṇī was the name of the chief of the ladies Kṛṣṇa brought from the place of Narakāsura.[112] The *Harivaṁśa* gives two different lists of wives of Kṛṣṇa at two different places. In the first list we get besides Rukmiṇī nine other names as follows :—Kālindī, Mitravindā, Satyā, the daughter of

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105(b) *Brahma Purāṇa* 103. 6.

106 *Mbh.* XIII. 14. 1.

107 *Ibid.* XVI. 4. 23.

108 *Ibid.* XIII. 14. 2.

109 *Bh.* X. 71. 41-42. But Ṣanātana Gosvāmi in his *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛta* (II. 5. 23.) omits the names of Śaivyā and Nāgnajiti and puts in their place Satyabhāmā and Lakṣmaṇā. He treats Satyā and Satyabhāmā as two different persons.

110 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 28. 1-5 and V. 32. 1-4.

111 *Ibid.* V. 32. 2.

112 Sanātana Goswami's commentary on *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛta* 11. 5. 24. But Nīlakaṇṭha in his commentary on the *Harivaṁśa* II. 60. 41 states that Rōhiṇi was the daughter of Kṛṣṇa's aunt Śrutakīrti.

Nagnajita, Jāmbavatī, Rōhiṇī, Mādrī, the daughter of the King of Madra, Satyabhāmā, Lakṣmaṇā and the daughter of Śaivya.[113] The list contains in addition the names of Sudattā, Pauravī and Subhīmā.[114] Sudattā, however, is identified with Śaivyā in a succeeding verse.[115] But while recounting their sons the names of additional queens like Sudevā are also mentioned. W. Ruben points out that the first list in the *Harivaṁśa* is the same as that furnished in the *Brahma Purāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Vāyu*, *Agni*, and *Matsya Purāṇa*. He surmises that in old times different oral traditions were current and that the *Harivaṁśa* collected all the materials available. This is why there are two different lists in the *Harivaṁśa*.[116] But even the two lists do not exhaust all the names of principal wives of Kṛṣṇa. While narrating the history of the Syamantaka jewel the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* stated that Satrājit gave in marriage to Kṛṣṇa all his three daughters Satyabhāmā, Vratinī and Prasvāpinī.[117] There was no social bar against such marriages. Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva had married all the seven daughters of Devaka.[118]

Rukmiṇī was the first and chief consort of Kṛṣṇa though Satyabhāmā appears to have been his favourite wife. Both of them were married, according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* before the marriage of Draupadī to the Pāṇḍvas.[119] The *Purāṇa* relates that Kṛṣṇa on hearing of the supposed death of the

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113 *Hv.* II. 60. 41-43.

114 *Ibid.* II. 104. 3-4.

115 *Ibid.* 104-11.

116 *J. R. A. S.* 1941, pp. 247 ff.

117 *Hv.* I. 38. 47 ; *Vāyu* 96. 55. The *Bhāgavata*, however, speaks of the marriage of Satyabhāmā alone (X. 56. 44).

118 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* IV. 14. 18-19.

119 *Ibid.* IV. 13. 70. 8.

Pāṇḍavas in the house built of lac went to Vāraṇāvata and in the meanwhile Satyabhāmā's father was murdered by those who had aspired to her hand. Satyabhāmā immediately hurried to Vāraṇāvata and implored Kṛṣṇa to avenge the death of her father. The *Bhāgavata* does not speak of Kṛṣṇa's sojourn to Vāraṇāvata because he had learnt of their escape from the house of lac; but it relates how Satyabhāmā went to Hastināpura to incite her husband against the murderers of her father.[120] The Jaina *Harivaṃśa*, however, states that Satyabhāmā was Kṛṣṇa's first wife, but as she did not pay adequate homage to Nārada, the latter contrived to humiliate by negotiating the marriage of Rukmiṇī with Kṛṣṇa.[121] He was in search of a damsel who would excel Satyabhāmā in beauty and finding such a girl in Rukmiṇī at Kuṇḍīnapura excited her love for Kṛṣṇa by drawing a picture of the latter. He also drew a picture of Rukmiṇī and showed it to Kṛṣṇa, who of course, fell in love with the picture. His love increased to fever heat when he received a secret letter from Rukmiṇī. He went to Kuṇḍīnapura in the company of Balarāma and found that her father and elder brother, Rukmī had already invited Śiśupāla to give her in marriage. Kṛṣṇa managed to steal her, but he was honest enough to send information to Bhīṣmaka, Rukmī and Śiśupāla, who, of course, came forward with a huge army to fight against him. Kṛṣṇa, according to this account, cut off the head of Śiśupāla but spared the life of Rukmī on the intercession of Rukmiṇī.[122]

The *Mahābhārata* also alludes to the defeat of Rukmī at the time of abduction of his sister by Kṛṣṇa. It does not

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120 *Bh.* X. 57. 1-8.
121 Jaina *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, 42. 29.
122 *Ibid.* 42. 78-94.

give any description of the marriage of Rukmiṇī. But it speaks of the vow taken by Rukmī to the effect that he would never go back to the capital without killing Kṛṣṇa.[123] He set up a new city at Bhojakaṭa and began to live there. He was one of the few determined enemies of Kṛṣṇa, though his daughter and grand-daughter were married to Pradyumna and Aniruddha respectively. The *Bhāgavata* relates that Rukmī on the persuasion of his sister gave his daughter Rukmavatī to Pradyumna in marriage. But with the same breath it states that Pradyumna ravished her and defeated the kings who had assembled.[124] Again despite the fact that he entertained hostile feelings to Kṛṣṇa he offered his grand-daughter Rocanā to Aniruddha with a view to pleasing Rukmiṇī. The author of the *Bhāgavata* takes care to note that Rukmī was fully aware of the impropriety involved in such a marriage, yet he agreed to it, presumably on account of the pressure put on him by his sister.[125]

The *Mahābhārata* depicts Rukmī as a vainglorious proud person. On hearing of the preparations for the Bhārata War he went to Arjuna with one *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers and offered to save the Pāṇḍavas by fighting for them as their general. Arjuna felt insulted at his tone and declined the offer. He then went to Duryōdhana and made the same proposal. But the latter, too, refused to accept his help. Thus being rejected by both the parties he went out on pilgrimage with a view to maintaining his forced neutrality.[126] The marriage of his grand-daughter must have taken place after the Bhārata War, because it was this

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123 *Mbh.*, V. 155. 11-12.
124 *Bh.* X. 61. 18-22.
125 *Bh.* X. 61. 25.
126 *Mbh.* V. 155. 33-36.

occasion that he was killed by Balarāma at the dice-play. The comment made by the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* on the conduct of Kṛṣṇa after this incident throws a flood of light on the difficulties which beset Kṛṣṇa : "When Kṛṣṇa heard that Rukmī had been killed by his brother, he made no remark, being afraid of Rukmiṇī on the one hand, and of Balarāma on the other ; but taking with him the newly wedded Aniruddha and the Yādava tribe, he returned to Dvārakā."[127]

The death of Rukmī took place after the Bhārata War, but the *Bhāgavata* describes it in Chapter 61, while the incidents connected with the *Rājasūya* such as the killing of Jarāsandha and Śiśupāla are related in Chapters 72, 73 and 74.

The story of marriage of Rukmiṇī with Kṛṣṇa is one of the most charming romantic episodes in the whole of the *Bhāgavata.* Rukmiṇī is represented here as taking the initiative in proposing to Kṛṣṇa in a letter sent through a special messenger. She had learnt that though her relatives were willing to offer her in marriage to Kṛṣṇa yet Rukmī had selected Śiśupāla as her husband. She had, however, heard such excellent reports regarding the beauty, valour and other qualities of Kṛṣṇa that she fell deeply in love with him. She threw off the maidenly shyness and implored him in that beautiful epistle to come at once, without the least delay to Vidarbha from Dvārakā and take her as his wife. She compared Śiśupāla to a jackal desirous of appropriating the share of the lion and beseeched Kṛṣṇa to rescue her in this predicament. She also gave him a broad hint as to the time and place for abducting her. According to the custom of her forefathers she would go to the temple of Ambikā situated outside the city gates on the day before

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127 *Viṣṇu P.* 28. 27-28.

the marriage.[128] On reading this letter Kṛṣṇa, intimated to the messenger that he, too, had fallen in love with her, and in spite of the opposition of her brother he would go and take her to wife. Her father had made all arrangements to bestow her on Śiśupāla, whose father, Damaghoṣa had already arrived with the bridegroom and his friends, including Jarāsandha, Śālva and Dantavakra. But Kṛṣṇa appeared before the temple of Ambikā as already arranged. The kings who had come to see her became so much bewitched by her beauty that their weapons fell down from their hands and they themselves dropped down on the ground.[129] Kṛṣṇa took her away in their presence. When they came to realise what had happened they followed Kṛṣṇa but were defeated. Jarāsandha consoled Śiśupāla and the kings went back to their respective capitals. The *Padma Purāṇa* relates that when Kṛṣṇa formally married Rukmiṇī at Dvārakā, Nanda and Yaśodā came to attend the ceremony all the way from Vraja.[130]

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* does not speak anything about the love which Rukmiṇī bore towards Kṛṣṇa before her marriage. It says that Kṛṣṇa fell in love with Rukmiṇī and solicited her in marriage. But her brother who hated Kṛṣṇa would not agree to the espousal. The lead in proposing her marriage with Śiśupāla was taken, according to this *Purāṇa*, by Jarāsandha, who assembled at the capital of Vidarbha with all the princes friendly to him. Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma and many other Yādavas went there merely to witness the wedding. "When there, Hari contrived, on the eve of the nuptials to carry off the princess, leaving Rāma and his kinsmen to sustain the weight of his enemies.

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128 *Bh*, X. 59. 37-42.

129 *Bh*. X. 53.

130 *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, 248. 6-7.

Pauṇḍraka, the illustrious Dantavakra, Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha, Śalva and other Kings, indignant at the insult, exerted themselves to kill Kṛṣṇa, but were repelled by Balarāma and the Yādavas."[131]

From the description of the *Harivaṁśa* we can grasp the full political significance of this marriage. It was a trial of strength between two hostile camps into which India was divided after the death of Kaṁsa. The *Harivaṃśa* specifically states that the chief reason for Rukmī's refusal to agree to the marriage of his sister with Kṛṣṇa was that the latter had killed Kaṁsa.[132] Rukmī was a member of the axis built up by Jarāsandha. Both Jarāsandha and Damaghoṣa were descendants of Vasu, the King of Cedi.[133] This is one of the reasons for the attachment of Śiśupāla to Jarāsandha, who was bent upon avenging the death of his son-in-law. In the fight which ensued after the abduction of Rukmiṇī, we find the kings of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Pauṇḍra, Kaliṅga, Karūṣa, Cedi and Vidarbha siding with the ruler of Magadha. The Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas had to fight alone with this powerful confederacy of kings. They achieved victory indeed, but the enmity of member of the confederacy towards Kṛṣṇa and other Yādavas became more deep-rooted after the marriage of Rukmiṇī. Śiśupāla could not forget the insult involved in the abduction of the bride meant for him.[134]

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131 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 26. 3-8.

132 *HV.* II. 59. 18.

133 *Ibid.* II. 59. 20-51.

134 *Mbh.* II, 42. 15-19. Hopkins misinterpreting on the manifestly hostile evidence of Śiśupāla, as related in the *Mahābhārata*, writes that Kṛṣṇa won Rukmiṇi from Śiśupāla (E. W. Hopkins—*Epic Mythology* P. 214). As a matter of fact what the *Mahābhārata* actually writes is that Kṛṣṇa referred to the prayer made by Śiśupāla to obtain Rukmiṇi in

Kṛṣṇa must have realised how he was diplomatically isolated at that time. Though he married the daughter of Bhīṣmaka he was not able to win him over to his side. In the *Mahābhārata* Kṛṣṇa regrets that Bhīṣmaka was as an ally of Jarāsandha. This is why he befriended the cause of the Pāṇḍavas so warmly. It was not on account of the fact that they happened to be the sons of his father's sister, Kuntī.

Dantavakra was also the son of his another paternal aunt, Śrutadevī. Śiśupāla was the son of yet another aunt, Śrutaśravā. They were his enemies. By making the Pāṇḍavas powerful he tried to build up an axis of Northern and Western Indian powers capable of fighting against what may be called the confederacy of the Eastern and Central Indian rulers. He liquidated his enemies in the following order :

I. The destruction of Mura and Naraka of the Eastern frontier.

In the *Mahābhārata* Kṛṣṇa described them as allies of Jarāsandha.[135] We find Arjuna complimenting him for making the way to Assam safe by killing Naraka.[136] Naraka's son Bhagadatta was present at the *Rājasūya*. He had been subjugated by Arjuna in course of his *Digvijaya*.[137]

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marriage, but proved as fruitless as the prayer of an unsuitable person to hear the Vedas. To this part of his speech Śiśupāla replied that he was astonished to hear that Kṛṣṇa did not feel ashamed in referring to Rukmiṇi in this assembly of kings as "*matpurvā*" one betrothed to him (Śiśupāla). He ridiculed Kṛṣṇa for not being ashamed as referring to his own wife as "*anyapurvā*", one who was betrothed to another (II. 42. 15-19). This sort of misinterpretation by Western scholars shows the danger of neglecting the evidence of the *Purāṇas* and depending exclusively on the *Mahābhārata*, which does not claim to be the life-history of Kṛṣṇa.

135 *Mbh.* II. 13. 13.

136 *Ibid.* III. 13. 29 ; V. 128. 44.

137 *Ibid.* II. 23. 19.

II. Annihilation of Kālayavana, who was powerful ally of Jarāsandha.[138]
III. Encompassing the death of Jarāsandha.
IV. Killing of Śiśupāla.
V. Killing of Śālva.
VI. Killing of Dantavakra.
VII. Destruction of Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva and his ally the King of Ḳāśī.
VIII. Killing of Dvivida.

All these were accomplished before the beginning of the Bhārata War. His position as the leader of Vṛṣṇi-Andhakas was unassailable on the eve of the great War. This explains why both Duryōdhana and Arjuna became so eager to enlist his support at that time.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* describe also Kṛṣṇa's fight against Bāṇa on the occasion of the marriage of his grandson, Aniruddha. Bāṇa's name is not included in the *Mahābhārata* among the allies of Jarāsandha. But in the *Bhāgavata* Kaṁsa describes him as a friend of Naraka.[139] His capital was at Śoṇītapura, which is identified by some with the area near Nowgong in Assam and by others with Devicotta in the Carnatic. As the *Bhāgavata* has described the fight between Kṛṣṇa and Bāṇa after the narration of the killing of Rukmī one might presume that this incident also probably took place after the Bhārata War. Both the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* state that Kṛṣṇa spared the life of Bāṇa on account of the intercession of Śaṅkara.[140] But

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138 *Viṣṇu P.* V. 23.

139 *Bh.* X. 36. 36. Kaṁsa here claims Dvivida, Samvara and Naraka also as his friends.

140 *Bh.* X. 63. 46. Kṛṣṇa also tells Mahādeva that as he had given a boon to Prahlāda to the effect that he would not kill any of his descendants, he did not take away the life of Bāṇa (X. 63. 47). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 33. 46.

Vidura, according to the *Mahābhārata*, tells the Kauravas on the eve of the Bhārata War that Kṛṣṇa had killed Bāṇa in war.[141] This statement shows that Kṛṣṇa's grandson was a married man before the Bhārata War.

If we were to arrange the chapters of the *Bhāgavata* on the heroic exploits of Kṛṣṇa after the transfer of the Yādavas to Dvārakā in the light of chronological order furnished by the *Mahābhārata* we would put them as follows :

Incident.	Existing Chapter number in Bh. Book X.	Proposed Chapter number.
1. Encouraging Arjuna to carry off Subhadrā	86	58
2. Counselling Yudhiṣṭhira regarding steps to be taken before performing *Rājasūya*	71	59
3. Killing of Naraka	59	60
4. Causing the death of Jarāsandha	72-73	61-62
5. Killing of Śiśupāla	74	63
6. Killing of Śālva	76-77	64-65
7. Fight with Bāṇa	62-63	66-67
8. Killing Pauṇḍra Vāsudeva and the King of Kāśī	66	68
9. Death of Dvivida at the hands of Balarāma	67	69
10. Killing of Dantavakra	78	70
11. Rukmī's death	61	71

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141 *Mbh.* V. 128, 47.

Chapter IV

KṚṢṆA'S LIFE AT DVĀRAKĀ

We have seen in the previous lecture that Kṛṣṇa had to encounter the opposition of a host of external enemies ever since the killing of Kaṁsa. His relation with the other members of the Vṛṣṇi-Andhaka tribes was also far from peaceful. We find him lamenting to Nārada in the *Śanti-parvan* thus : 'This great family and clan of mine—they call me Lord, Lord, all right enough, but in reality I am a veritable slave to them in the mask of their master. The only enjoyment allowed to me is to listen to their hard words and constant complaints. The incessant invectives I am subjected to by those for whose welfare I am slaving rankles in my heart perpetually. They take delight in driving the iron points of their sharp words into my soul as eagerly as the fire-maker in churning the lower piece of wood with the upper stick. My elder brother Balarāma is ever taking pride in his physical strength, my younger brother Gada is ever displaying his gracefulness, my son Pradyumna is infatuated with his own beauty and look helpless. Who is more pitiable than one who has got the ever-quarrelling Āhuka and Akrūra as his relatives, but then again who could be more miserable than the person for whom Āhuka and Akrūra do not bear any friendly feeling ? Like the mother of two gambling sons I wish the victory of one without meaning defeat to the other'.[1]

A critical study of Kṛṣṇa's relation with Akrūra will show that there is hardly an exaggeration in the remark quoted above. One must have a knowledge of the genealogy of the Vṛṣṇi-Andhakas in order to follow intelligently the

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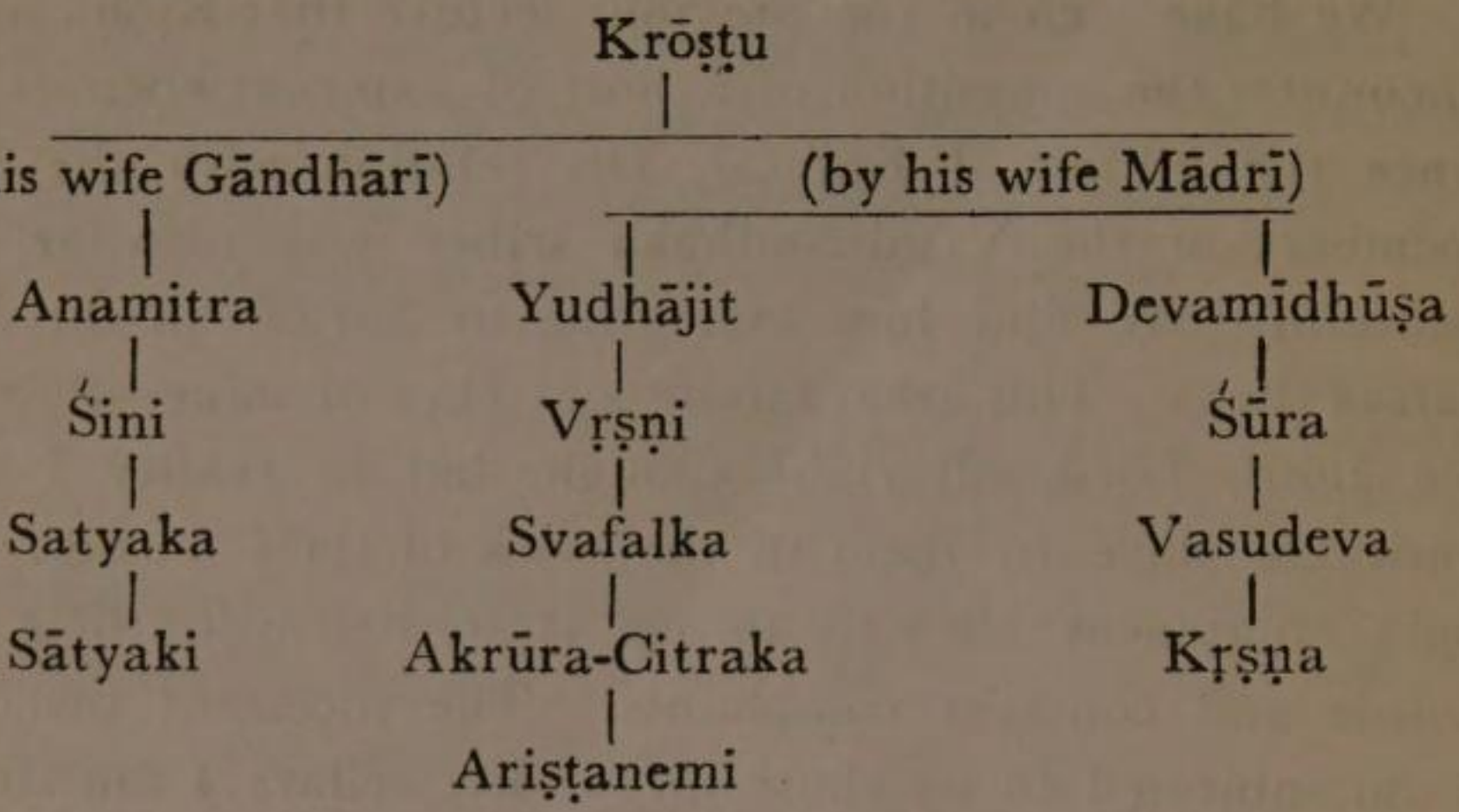
1 *Mbh.* XII. 82. 5-11.

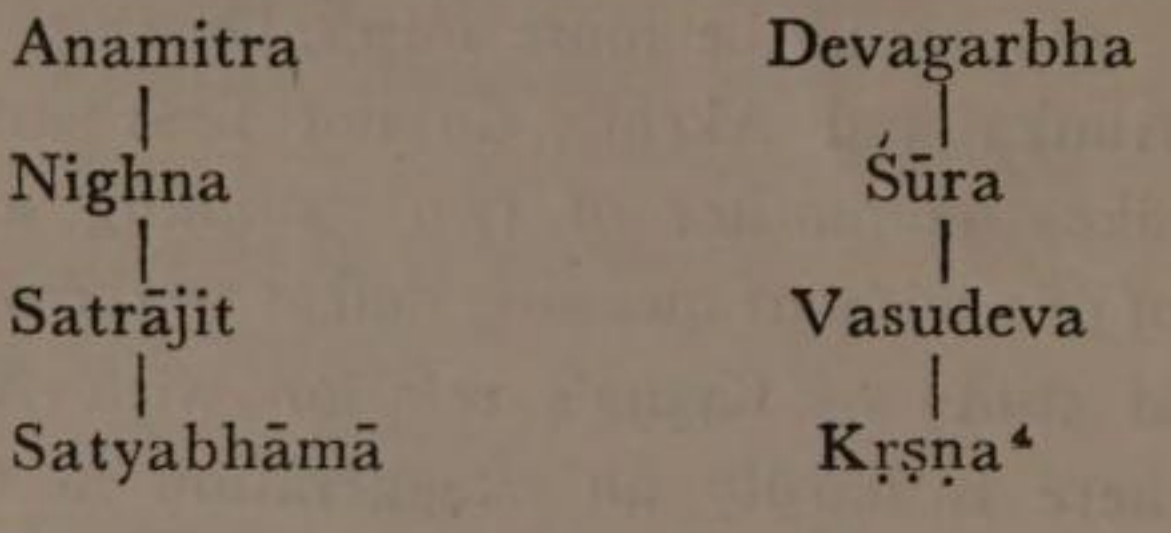
relation of Kṛṣṇa with his kinsmen. The *Harivaṁśa* which professes to give the genealogy by its very name, gives the clearest picture of the lineal connection amongst the principal figures in the dramatic events which follow.



Thus according to the *Harivaṁśa* Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra and Sātyaki are all cousins who had a common ancestor in Kroṣṭu four generations ago.[2]

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* makes Śini a brother of Anamitra in the place of son but adds the information that Anamitra had a son named Nighna, whose sons were Prasena and Satrājit.[3]

According to this *Purāṇa* the relation of Kṛṣṇa with Satyabhāmā, the daughter of Satrājit, would be as follows :-



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2 *Harivaṁśa*, I. 34. 1-11 and 38. 10-13.

3 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 8-10.

4 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,, IV. 14. 26-27.

The father of Śūra is called here Devagarbha instead of Devamidhūṣa.

The eventful history of the Syamantaka Jewel is the best illustration of the mournful reflections of Kṛṣṇa quoted in the *Mahābhārata*. The quarrel over the possession of Syamantaka did not last for a year or two, but according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it continued for more than sixty-two years.[5]

It was thus not a mere episode in the life of Kṛṣṇa. It lasted throughout the major portion of his life at Dvārakā and was responsible for estrangement between brother and brother, husband and wife, and several sections of the Sātvata family and also for several cruel murders. The *Mahābhārata* does not elaborate the incident but states that the immediate provocation for the starting of the fatal civil war at Prabhāsa was Sātyaki's narration of the part played by Kṛtavarmā in murdering Satyabhāmā's father Satrājit through Akrūra for stealing the jewel Syamantaka from him.[6] From the genealogical account of the Yādavas given in the *Matsya*[7], *Viṣṇu*[8], *Agni*[9] and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[10] we learn that Kṛtavarmā and Śatadhanu were brothers of

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5 *Viṣṇu P.* IV. 13. 110. Wilson's copy contained the words 'fifty-two years' (P. 344).

6 *Mbh*, XVI. 3. 79.

7 *Matsya*, 44. 77 gives the following table : Bhajamāna—Viduratha —Rājādhideva — Sonāśva—Pratikṣatra — Bhoja—Pratikṣatra—Hṛdika—his ten sons including Kṛtavarmā and Śatadhanvā.

8 *Viṣṇu*, IV. 14. 22-24, states as follows : Bhajamāna—Viduratha—Śūra—Śami—Pratikṣatra—Svayambhoja—Hṛdika—his sons Kṛtavarmā, Śatadhanvā, Devarher and Devagarbha. Devagarbha's son was Śūrasena whose son was Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa.

9 *Agni Purāṇa*, 275. 38-39.

10 *Bhāgavata*, IX. 24. 27-28 which states Chitraratha—Viduratha—Śūra—Bhajamāna — Śini — Bhoja — Hṛdika — whose three sons were Devamiḍh, Śatadhanu and Kṛtavarmā. Devamiḍha's son was Śūra—whose son was Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa.

the great-grandfather of Kṛṣṇa. These could not have taken part in the Syamantaka affair. The tables given in the foot-note here will show that some names were as common in the Yādava family as the names of Henry, Edward and George in the English royal dynasties. It is more likely that Kṛtavarmā, who figured so prominently in the Bhārata War was quite a different person from the brother of the great grand-father of Kṛṣṇa. According to the *Vāyu Purāṇa* Śatadhanvā, who murdered Satrājit, was the king of Mithilā.[11]

Akrūra enjoyed a position of trust and influence in the Bhoja—Vṛṣṇi-Andhaka confederacy. His father Śvafalks was held in great respect because of his sanctity of character and some magical powers. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* famine, plague, dearth and other visitations were unknown to the place where Śvafalka cared to reside. Once when there was want of rain in the kingdom Kāśīrāja, Śvafalka was brought there and immediately there fell rain from the heavens.[12] The king of Kāśi gave his daughter in marriage to him, probably out of a sense of gratitude. Some miracles are related also about Akrūra's mother Gāndinī. She is said to have been in the womb of her mother for twelve years and when her father agreed to promise to maka a gift of a cow every day to a Brāhmaṇa did she vouchsafe to come out after a period of another three years. These stories might have been pure concoction but their circulation amongst the credulous certainly added to the power and influence of Akrūra and his parents. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that as long as Gāndinī lived she gave a cow to a Brāhmaṇa every day.[13]

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11 *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99. 74.

12 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 115-116.

13 *Ibib*. IV. 13. This is not found in the Gitā Press edition in Sanskrit ; but Wilson's Ms. had it and he has translated it (P. 345).

We have seen in Lecture II that Akrūra enjoyed the confidence of Kaṁsa but Kṛṣṇa won him over by marrying him with the beautiful daughter of Ugrasena. But she was not his only wife. The *Matsya Purāṇa* relates that while he had two sons by the daughter of Ugrasena, he got eleven valorous sons by his wife Ratnā, the daughter of Śaivya. He had also another wife named Aśvinī, by whom he got thirteen other sons. The names of all the twenty-six sons of Akrūra are recounted in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[14] This shows that they were men of considerable importance.

The story of the Syamantaka jewel must have come down to the Paurāṇikas from great antiquity. It is related in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* in prose and not in verses. It occurs not in course of the narration of Kṛṣṇa's life at Dvārakā, but in the midst of genealogical table itself, which is given in an earlier part of that book. Another interesting feature of the story is that it is related in the same language, with occasional variations, in the *Harivaṁśa*[15] and the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.[16] The *Brahma Purāṇa* narrates it with considerable variation both in language and in substance.[17] The *Matsya* and *Agni Purāṇa* relate the substance of the story while recounting the genealogy of the Yādavas. In the *Bhāgavata*[18] and the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*[19] alone the Syamantaka story occur in the midst of narration of the life-story of Kṛṣṇa. The attempt to varnish the story to make it worthy of the race of Vṛṣṇi is quite palpable in the *Bhāgavata*.

According to the older tradition as recorded in the

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14 *Matsya Purāṇa*, 45. 28-33.
15 *Harivaṁśa*, I. 38.15-58 ; 39. 1-40.
16 *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 96. 21-97.
17 *Brahma Purāṇa*, 15. 12-40.
18 *Bhāgavata*, X. 56 and 57.
19 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, IV. 12-25.

Harivaṁśa[20], *Vāyu*[21], *Viṣṇu*[22], and the *Bhāgavata*[23], Satrājit got the jewel from the Sun. But the *Matsya*[24], *Agni*[25] and *Brahma Purāṇa*[26] record that it was Prasena who was the original owner of the jewel. From a comparative study of the story in the different *Purāṇas* it appears that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* gives the fullest as well as the most consistent account of the whole affair. But we will get a clearer account of the whole affair if we supplement it with the information supplied by the *Harivaṁśa, Vāyu* and the *Brahma Purāṇa.*

The Syamantaka jewel was so exceedingly bright that one who wore it was mistaken by the people as the Sun. It had, moreover the miraculous virtue of yielding eight loads of gold every day. People believed that it could dispel all fear of famine, fire, robbers and wild beasts. When Kṛṣṇa heard of the wonderful virtues of the jewel he asked Satrājit to keep it in the possession of Ugrasena. the chief of the confederacy. But Satrājit did not agree to this proposal. All our authorities repeat in the same language the remark that although Kṛṣṇa had the power of taking the jewel from Satrājit, yet he did not deprive him of it with a view to avoiding any occasion for disagreement amongst the Yādava family. Satrājit wanted, however, to take adequate precaution against a repetition of Kṛṣṇa's request for transferring it. He handed it over to his brother Prasena.

Here the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states another wonderful peculiarity of the jewel, that although it was an inexhaustible

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20 *Harivaṁśa*, I. 38. 14-22.
21 *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 96. 21-28.
22 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 16-18,
23 *Bhāgavata*, X. 56. 3.
24 *Matsya*, 45. 40,
25 *Agni*, 375. 40.
26 *Brahma Purāṇa*. 14. 12.

source of good to a virtuous person, yet when worn by a man of bad character it caused his death. Such a peculiarity has not been described by any other authority. Probably the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* wanted to show that Prasena and Śatadhanvā were not of good character and that is why they were killed. But the sequel will show that even Satrājit himself lost his life for the sake of the jewel. Prasena, according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* version of the story, hang it round his neck and went out for a hunting. In the forest he was killed by a lion. The *Matsya Purāṇa* omits the story of the lion and directly brings forward the bear. The other versions, however, agree in holding that while the lion was carrying off the jewel it was killed by Jāmbavat, the King of the bears. He gave it to his son to play with. When sometime elapsed and Prasena did not come back, the Yādavas began to whisper among themselves: 'This is Kṛṣṇa's doing; desirous of the jewel, and not obtaining it, he has perpetrated the murder of Prasena in order to get it into his possession'.[27] The *Bhāgavata* states that it was Satrājit who whispered to people about his suspicion that Kṛṣṇa had probably killed Prasena for taking possession of the jewel.[28]

When these rumours came to the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa he took a number of Yādavas with him and pursued the course of Prasena by the impression of his horse's hoofs. He came to the spot where there were marks of the killing of the horse and its master by the lion. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says that on seeing the spot Kṛṣṇa was acquitted by all the people of any share in Prasena's death. But the *Harivaṁśa* and the other *Purāṇas* do not speak of such an early verdict. According to them Kṛṣṇa went into the bear's den, fought

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27 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 35.

28 *Bh*. X. 56. 16.

with Jāmbavat for twenty-one days[29] according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and twent-eight days according to the *Bhāgavata.*[30] Meanwhile the Yādavas who had accompanied him to the forest and had been waiting for him for seven or eight days felt convinced that Kṛṣṇa must have died in the cavern. They returned to the city and told his relatives of his death. They performed tne Śrāddha ceremony of Kṛṣṇa. But the latter was able to overpower Jāmbavat and secure the jewel from him. The *Matsya Purāṇa* records that Jāmbavat was killed by Kṛṣṇa.[31] When Jāmbavat was overpowered by the superior strength of Kṛṣṇa he prostrated himself before him and offered him his daughter Jāmbavatī and the Syamantaka jewel.

On returning to Dvārakā Kṛṣṇa related to the assembly of kinsmen the story of the recovery of the jewel. He returned it to Satrājit and was thus exonerated from the crime of which he had been falsely accused. Satrājit now felt ashamed of his conduct, and at the same time apprehended the hostility of powerful Kṛṣṇa. With a view to conciliating him he gave his three daughters, including Satyabhāmā to Kṛṣṇa.[32]

The drama reaches its climax with this marriage. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Harivaṁśa* speak of the disappointment

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29 *Viṣṇu P.* IV. 13. 46.

30 *Bh.* X. 56. 24.

31 *Matsya*, 45. 16.

32 While the *Harivaṁśa* (38. 47) and *Matsya Purāṇa* (46. 21) speak of the marriage of three daughters of Satrājit to Kṛṣṇa, the *Vāyu* (96. 55) and the *Brahma Purāṇa* (14. 47-48) make the words *Vratinī* and *Tapasvinī* or *Prasvāpanī* as adjectives of Satyabhāmā and not as separate names. The *Skanda Purāṇa Viṣṇukhaṇḍa, Kārttikamāhātmya* (Ch. 13. 18) says that Satyabhāmā in her previous birth was the wife of a disciple of her named Candra, who was born as Akrūra.

of prominent Yādavas like Akrūra, Kṛtavarmā and Śatadhanvan, who had all aspired for Satyabhāmā's hand. Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā said to Śatadhanvan : "By giving his daughter to Kṛṣṇa Satrājit has offered a gross insult to you as well as to us, who solicited his daughter. Let him not live. Why do you not kill him and take the jewel ? Should Kṛṣṇa thereupon enter into feud with you, we will take your part." Thus being assured of their help Śatadhanvan killed Satrājit during the absence of Kṛṣṇa from Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa on hearing of the burning of the Pāṇḍavas to death in the house of lac at Vāraṇāvata, had gone there. The *Harivaṁśa* and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* state that Akrūra also assured Śatadhanvan that the whole of Dvārakā was on his side and therefore, he had nothing to be afraid of.[33]

Satyabhāmā, however, being overcome with grief at the murder of her father, hurried to Varaṇāvata and induced him to ruturn to Dvārakā to avenge the death of her father. The first thing Kṛṣṇa did on coming back to Dvārakā was to win over Balarāma to his side by a sort of compact. He said : "A lion slew Prasena, hunting in the forests ; and now Satrājit has been murdered by Śatadhanvan. As both these are removed the jewel which belonged to them, is our common right. Up then, ascend your car and put Śatadhanvan to death."[34] This was really an offer to Balarāma to half the share in the jewel, because Kṛṣṇa as the son-in-law of Satrājit could put forward some claim to it but Balarāma had none. Meanwhīle Śatadhanvan turned to his fellow-conspirators for help against the determined efforts of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to punish him. But Kṛtavarman flatly told him that he was unable to engage in a conflict against a combination of both the heroic

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33 *Harivaṁśa*, 39. 5 ; *Vāyu*,96. 60.

34 *Viṣnu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 80.

brothers.[35] Akrūra said : "I cannot defend you. You please turn to some other protector. Who can dare to fight against Kṛṣṇa, who had performed so many heroic deeds ?" Śatadhanvan now realised his helpless position. He considered it highly unsafe to travel with the jewel, despite its reputed power to protect one against all sorts of danger and calamities. He now implored Akrūra to take charge of the jewel. Akrūra agreed to do so on condition that Śatadhanvan promised not to divulge to any body that the jewel was in his possession. The latter agreed and hurried away from Dvārakā on a mare, that could travel a hundred leagues a day.

The *Harivaṁśa* here offers the comment that Akrūra was indeed able to help Śatadhanvan but did not care to do so on account of his crookedness.[36] In the *Bhāgavata* we find Akrūra declining to help Śatadhanvan and mentally offering repeated salutations to Kṛṣṇa. Here he behaved like a devotee though at the time of inciting Śatadhanvan to murder Satrājit he had forgotten everything regarding Kṛṣṇa's divine powers.[37] It is really a wonder as to how the man who, according to the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* had visualised Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as veritable gods at the time of taking bath in the Yamunā on the way from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā, could covet a girl, form a conspiracy to murder and then refuse to help his fellow conspirator at his need.

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35 Kṛtavarman, according to the *Mahābhārata* was all along hostile to Kṛṣṇa. He was one of the seven Mahārathas of the Vṛṣṇis (*Mbh.* II. 14). He joined Duryōdhana with one *akṣauhiṇi* of soldiers (V. 7. 163) and took a leading part in killing Abhimanyu (VII. 73) and murdering the five sons of Draupadi (X. 8).

36 *Harivaṁśa*, 39. 13 ; *Vāyu*, 96. 68.

37 *Bh.* X. 57. 10-19.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pursued Śatadhanvan up to Mithilā. When the latter's mare died he ran on foot; Kṛṣṇa too finding the ground unsuitable for chariot asked his elder brother to wait there and he followed Śatadhanvan on foot too. Soon he overtook the murderer and killed him. But he could not find the jewel with him though he made a careful search for it. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* records that Kṛṣṇa returned to Balabhadra, and told him that they had effected the death of Śatadhanvan to no purpose, for the precious gem, the quintessence of all worlds, was not upon his person. When Balabhadra heard this, he flew into a violent rage, and said to Vāsudeva: "Fie upon you, to be thus greedy of wealth! I acknowledge no brotherhood with you. Here lies my path. Go whither you please; I have done with Dvārakā, with you, with all our house. It is no use to seek to impose upon me with thy perjuries." Thus reviling his brother, who fruitlessly endeavoured to appease him, Balabhadra went to the city of Videha, where Janaka received him hospitably and there "he remained" for three years.[38] The *Harivaṁśa* states that as soon as Kṛṣṇa came back to the chariot after killing Śatadhanvan Balarāma asked him to give the jewel.[39] The *Bhāgavata*, however, omits all references to the wrath of Balarāma. It merely states that the latter asked Kṛṣṇa to search for the jewel at Dvārakā, while he would like to go to Mithilā to meet his friend, Janaka.[40] All our authorities are unanimous in holding that Duryōdhana came over to Mithilā to learn the art of fighting with mace from Balarāma during this period.

The Yādavas were considerably worried over the

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38 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 99-107.
39 *Harivaṁśa*, I. 39. 20.
40 *Bhāgavata*, X. 57. 23-24.

continued absence of Balarāma from Dvārakā. In course of three years they could not find any evidence of the possession of the jewel by Kṛṣṇa. Ugrasena and other chiefs of the Yādava clan being thus satisfied with the innocence of Kṛṣṇa, went to Videha, removed Balarāma's suspicion and brought him home.

Now our authorities relate how Akrūra utilised the immense wealth which he derived from the Syamantaka jewel. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* records that he constantly celebrated religious rites for sixty-two years and lived in affluence.[41] The sacrifices were undertaken more for the sake of his personal safety than for religious merit; because the scriptures laid down that one would be guilty of murder of a Brāhmaṇa if he killed a Kṣatṛiya engaged in a sacrifice. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* and the *Harivaṁśa* state that Akrūra performed the sacrifices with various jewels and other valuable gifts for a period of sixty years.[42] From the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it appears that so many gifts and sacrifices failed to effect any change in the heart of Akrūra. He and his partisans contrived to put Śatrughna, the great-grandson of Sātvata, to death. Finding Dvārakā too hot for him he fled away with all who were in bonds of allegiance to him. But soon after his departure various calamities, including famine and plague fell on the city of Dvārakā. The Yādavas held a council and came to the conclusion that the pestilence and dearth were due to the absence of Akrūra. The resolution ran as follows: "Let him then be invited to return; the faults of men of exalted worth must not be too severely scrutinised."[43]

Akrūra was such an important personage that a

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41 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 108-110

42 *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 96. 81; *Harivaiṁśa*, I. 39. 26.

43 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 13. 129.

commission headed by Keśava, Ugrasena and Balabhadra was sent to him to persuade him to come back. We must now quote *verbatim* from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* to show how great a diplomat Kṛṣṇa was and that in sheer diplomatic skill Akrūra was not in any way inferior to him. The *Purāṇa* records that as soon as Akrūra returned all calamities came to an end. Kṛṣṇa pondered over the event and said to himself: "The great Syamantaka jewel must be in his keeping, for, such I have heard are amongst its properties. This Akrūra too has been lately celebrating sacrifice after sacrifice, his own means are insufficient for such expenses." Having come to this conclusion, he called a meeting of all the Yādavas at his house, under the pretext of some festive celebration. According to the *Harivaṁśa* Kṛṣṇa said that the wrath which had risen in his mind sixty years ago was now enkindled and Akrūra should hand over the jewel to him.[44] But the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says that when all had taken their seat, Kṛṣṇa entered into conversation with Akrūra, and, after laughing and joking, said to him: "Kinsman, you are a very prince in your liberality; but we know very well that the precious jewel which was stolen by Sudhanvan was delivered by him to you, and is now in your possession to the great benefit of this kingdom. So let it remain; we will derive advantage from its virtues. But Balabhadra suspects that I have got it with me. Therefore, out of kindness to me, show it to the assembly. When Akrūra, who had the jewel with him, was thus taxed, he hesitated what he should do. 'If I deny that I have the jewel', thought he, 'they will search my person, and find the gem hidden amongst my clothes. I cannot submit to a search." So reflecting, Akrūra said to Nārāyaṇa, the cause of the whole world: "It is true that the Syamantaka jewel was entrusted

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44 *Harivaṁśa*, 39. 37; *Vāyu*, 96. 94.

to me by Śatadhanvan when he went from hence. I expected every day that you would ask me for it, and with much inconvenience therefore I have kept it until now. The charge of it has subjected me to so much anxiety, that I have been incapable of enjoying any pleasure, and have never known a moment's ease. Afraid that you would think me unfit to retain possession of a jewel so essential to the welfare of the kingdom, I forbore to mention to you its being in my hands; but now take it yourself, and give the care of it to whom you please." He showed the jewel to the assembled Yādavas. As soon as it was displayed, Balabhadra claimed it as his property jointly with Kṛṣṇa as formerly agreed upon. But Satyabhāmā demanded it as her right, on the ground that it had originally belonged to her father.

At this juncture Kṛṣṇa invented the story of mythical virtue of the jewel, which brought death to one not leading a life of perpetual continence. He for himself said that he would not take it as he had sixteen thousand wives, nor would Satyabhāmā be prepared to sacrifice sensual pleasures. He also said that for Balabhadra too it was not possible to lead a life of self-denial. It was, therefore, best to allow Akrūra to retain possession of it, as it has been proved by past experience that his possession of the jewel had been productive of much benefit to the country. Thus was the problem of Syamantaka solved after a period of more than sixty two years. The *Harivaṁśa* says that Akrūra gave his sister in marriage to Kṛṣṇa.[45]

According to the disputed verses in the *Ādiparvan* Arjuna, who was only junior to Kṛṣṇa by three months, was twenty-seven years and six months old at the time of the

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45 *Harivaṁśa*, 39. 34; *Vāyu*, 96. 91.

burning of the house of lac at Vāraṇāvata.[46] The dispute then lasted from the twenty-eighth year to the ninetieth year of Kṛṣṇa's life. Throughout this period Akrūra enjoyed plenty of wealth and exercised good deal of influence amongst the Yādavas. The *Matsya Purāṇa* gives the following adjectives to Akrūra—heroic, hospitable, learned and charitable.[47] It is no wonder, therefore, that Kṛṣṇa should be ever anxious to conciliate him as he himself is reported to have told Nārada.

The other person of whom Kṛṣṇa spoke as equally troublesome was Āhuka. He must have been a different person from the father of Ugrasena. In the *Mahābhārata* we find that when Kṛṣṇa went in pursuit against Śālva he placed Āhuka in charge of defending Dvārakā.[48] Kṛṣṇa could not have entrusted such an important task to an extremely old man like his maternal grandfather's father. Moreover, if Ugrasena was the chief of Dvārakā it would have been improper on the part of Kṛṣṇa to command him to perform a duty. This Āhuka, according to the epic, had one hundred sons, each of whom is described to have been almost equal to a god.[49] Kṛṣṇa told Yudhiṣṭhira that Āhuka would help him in punishing Duryōdhana.[50] According to the *Bhāgavata* both Akrūra and Āhuka accompanied Kṛṣṇa to Kurukṣetra when the latter went there to have a purificatory bath on the occasion of the solar eclipse.[51]

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46 *Mbh. Ādiparvan*, Critical ed., appendix P. 913 and Haridas Siddhantabagisa edition I. 117. 3-15.

47 *Matsya*, 46. 27.

48 *Mbh.* III. 20. 783 (Cal. ed.).

49 *Mbh.* II. 14. 621 (Cal. ed.).

50 *Ibid.* III. 51. 1994 (Cal. ed.).

51 *Bhāg.* X. 82. 5.

The Syamantaka jewel episode was responsible for the marriage of Kṛṣṇa with Jāmbavatī and Satyabhāmā. Jāmbavatī's father was probably an aboriginal chief with the totem of bear. The *Harivaṁśa* calls him the king of bears,[52] but the *Mahābhārata* describes Jāmbavatī as the daughter of chief of Monkeys—*Kapīndraputrī*.[53] There are some other instances of contradictory statements in these two works though the *Harivaṁśa* is called a mere supplement to the epic. The most notable difference is with regard to the time of birth of Sāmba. The *Harivaṁśa* states that Sāmba was born of Jāmbavatī in the same month in which Pradyumna was stolen away by Samvara.[54] The *Mahābhārata*, however, says that twelve years after the killing Samvara, Jāmbavatī requested Kṛṣṇa to give her a son. She also reminded Kṛṣṇa that the sons of Rukmiṇī had been so vigorous because Kṛṣṇa had procreated them after practising austerities for twelve years. Kṛṣṇa agreed to propitiate Śiva with a view to getting a good son for Jāmbavatī.[55] Sāmba, therefore, was junior to Pradyumna by some thirty years. Samvara's wife fell in love with youthful Pradyumna and helped him to kill her husband. This could not have happened before the sixteenth year of Pradyumna. If Jāmbavatī beseeches Kṛṣṇa for a son twelve years after this and if Kṛṣṇa spends a year or so in performing austerities, Sāmba must have been born at least thirty years after the birth of Pradyumna.

Another glaring contrast between the accounts of *Harivaṁśa* and *Mahābhārata* is to be found in the enumeration of sons of Kṛṣṇa. From the *Mahābhārata* we learn that

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52 *Harivaṁśa*, 38. 41.
53 *Mbh*. III. 14. 24.
54 *Harivaṁśa*, 110. 1.
55 *Mbh*. XIII. 14. 12ff.

Pārvatī gave a boon to Kṛṣṇa that he would have one hundred sons.[56] But the *Harivaṁśa* after specifying the names of some 49 sons and 11 daughters state that Kṛṣṇa had as many as one lakh and eighty thousand sons[57] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* corroborates the number but gives somewhat different names of the sons.[58] The *Matsya*[59] and the *Agni*[60] also give the same number. The *Bhāgavata* states that Kṛṣṇa procreated ten sons uniformly in each of his sixteen thousand and one hundred and eight wives.[61] The *Harivaṁśa*, however, mentions definitely that Rukmiṇī had ten, Satyabhāmā seven, Jāmbavatī five, Nāgnajitī two, Sudattā Śaivyā five, Mādrī three, Lakṣmaṇā three and Kālindī two sons. The *Bhāgavata* says that the following eighteen were great heroes amongst his sons : Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Chitrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva, Sunandana, Citrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha.[62] It is curious to note that the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* record the names of Pradyumna, Dīptimat, Bhānu, Sāmba, Vṛka and Śrutadeva only. The other names are unknown to them. Another notable feature of the *Bhāgavata* list is that Aniruddha has been mentioned as one of the sons of Kṛṣṇa, though in the earlier part he has been called his grandson. Śrīdhara Svāmin comments that in this case

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56 *Mbh.* XIII. 15.

57 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 103. 21-22.

58 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* V. 32. Of Rukmiṇi's son six names are common between the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* but whereas the former recounts the names of Cārudeha, Cārugarbha, Cārubāhu and Druma, the latter mentions Cārudeha, Cārugupta, Sucāru and Cāru.

59 *Matsya*, 47. 21.

60 *Agni*, 276. 7.

61 *Bh.* X. 90. 31.

62 *Ibid.* X. 90. 33-34. (P. T. O.)

the word 'son' has been used to denote the majority of seventeen. Jīvagosvāmin holds that there might have been a son of Kṛṣṇa named Aniruddha. But was he so famous as to be counted amongst the eighteen heroes of the Yādava family ? Pradyumna's son, indeed, has been described as a person having the strength of ten thousand elephants.

The *Matsya* and the *Agni Purāṇa* state that the total number of the Yādavas at Dvārakā was three crores.[63] The *Skanda Purāṇa* increases the number to fifty-six crores.[64] It also relates that Kṛṣṇa had as many as nine lakhs of golden palaces. The *Bhāgavata* says that the number of the Yādavas could not be counted even in ten thousand years. It gives an idea of the total population by stating that the strength of the teaching staff for the Kumāras of the Yādava family was three crores eight thousand and eight hundred.[65] The Yādavas probably solved their food problem by importing foodstuff from the heavens.

The Jaina *Harivaṁśa* gives a highly interesting account of the relation of Kṛṣṇa with Ariṣṭanemi, Nemikumāra or Neminātha, the twenty-second Tīrthaṁkara of the Jainas. According to the older *Harivaṁśa* Ariṣṭanemi is the son of Citraka, the brother of Akrūra. He was thus one step lower than Kṛṣṇa in the genealogical table.[66] But the Jaina *Harivaṁśa* says that Neminātha was the son of Samudra-vijaya, the eldest brother of Vasudeva.[67] Though born of the

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The *Bhāgavata* has mentioned the names of 82 sons of Kṛṣṇa in an earlier Chapter (X. 61. 8-18). But in this big list too we miss the names of persons like Nyagrodha, Virūpa, Madhu, Aruṇa, Puṣkara and Vedabāhu, though they are said to have been *Mahāratha*.

63 *Matsya*, 47. 25 ; *Agni*, 278. 8.

64 *Skanda Purāṇa*, *P*. 5263.

65 *Bh*. X. 90. 41.

66 *Hv*. 34. 11.

67 Jaina *HV*. 18. 12.

elder brother of Vāsudeva, Neminātha was younger than Kṛṣṇa in age. One day while Kṛṣṇa was sitting in his Council Chamber along with his relatives and friends, Neminātha appeared there. Kṛṣṇa rising up from his seat went forward to welcome him. He took his seat on the same throne which Kṛṣṇa was occupying. Councillors began to discuss among themselves as to who was the strongest person in the world. Some mentioned the name of Bhīma, some of Arjuna and others of Kṛṣṇa. But Baladeva said that none was as strong as Neminātha. Hearing this Kṛṣṇa requested the latter to have a trial of strength through a wrestling bout with him. But Neminātha said 'Oh elder brother, if you want to test my strength you try to move my feet from this throne.' Kṛṣṇa failed to do so. From that day Kṛṣṇa began to show greater regards for him.[68]

Once upon a time Kṛṣṇa with his sixteen thousand wives went to the Girnar hills during the spring season. There was good deal of fun and prolic. Kṛṣṇa asked his wives to play with Neminātha in a bower in the forest. Some began to kiss him on the chest, some to touch him, some to smell him and some tried to turn him round by catching hold of his hand. Some ladies placed garlands on his head with a view to embracing him.[69] In the summer months Neminātha being requested by the ladies played with them in the cool waters of tanks. They began to swim and play with syringes. Neminātha was thoroughly drenched by them. The ladies were so much infatuated with the play that their ear-rings dropped, hairs became untied, and looked unsteady. At last they all got up from the water and Neminātha's attendants dressed him up with dry clothes. He asked Jāmbavatī to squeeze out his

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68 *Ibid.* 55. 1-14.

69 *Ibid.* 55. 46.

wet cloth. The beloved queen of Kṛṣṇa took offence at it and said that even her heroic husband had never asked him to perform such menial work. He said that Kṛṣṇa's valour is not unique. He ran to the serpent-bed of Kṛṣṇa, stood on it and blew the *Pāñcajanya* conch of Kṛṣṇa. This caused a great commotion in the city. When Kṛṣṇa came to learn that Neminātha had done all these with a view to teaching a lesson to Jāmbavatī he became highly pleased.

Kṛṣṇa negotiated the marriage of Neminātha with a girl of the Bhoja family named Rājimatī. Preparations were made for the celebration of the marriage. Princes from different quarters came to attend it. One day while Neminātha was taking a walk in the forest he found a large number of animals tied there. Asking the cause of bringing together such a huge number of animals he was told that these had been collected for providing meat to the non-vegetarian princes. On hearing this he gave up the idea of marrying so that these poor animals might be set free. He left the world to perform austerities.[70]

We find the hermit Neminātha meeting Kṛṣṇa once again at Dvārakā on the occasion of the marriage of Kṛṣṇa's younger brother, Gajakumāra. This time he imparted to the Yādavas instructions on religion and metaphysics. He told Kṛṣṇa that he was the twenty-second Tīrthaṁkara, and that the last two, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra, would appear in future.[71]

The Jain *Harivaṁśa* draws a fascinating picture of the rivalry between Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. In this book Satyabhāmā, the daughter of a *Vidyādhara*, is described as the eldest queen and Rukmiṇī as the second one. As

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70 *Ibid.* 55. 86-108.
71 *Ibid* 60. 126-141.

each queen had separate quarters Satyabhāmā had not met Rukmiṇī. She one day asked Kṛṣṇa to introduce her to the latter. Kṛṣṇa agreed and having placed Rukmiṇī beneath a mango-grove by the side of beautiful pond, he asked Satyabhāmā to wait there while he pretended to go to fetch Rukmiṇī. Satyabhāmā mistook the lady there to be a goddess as she could not believe that a human being could have that sort of beauty and gracefulness. She bowed down to her, prayed for her own prosperity and the humiliation of her rival, Rukmiṇī. At that time Kṛṣṇa appeared on the scene and exclaimed that the two had become so friendly without waiting for an introduction by him. Rukmiṇī now saluted her and praised her humility as it was the surest sign of high pedigree.[72]

After some time a messenger came from Hastināpura with the proposal that Kṛṣṇa should agree to marry his eldest son, when born, to the daughter of Duryōdhana, if and when born. Kṛṣṇa expressed great delight at this proposal of Duryōdhana. Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā also made an agreement to the effect that she who would not give birth to the eldest son of Kṛṣṇa would at the time of the marriage of the boy place the tuft of her hair at the feet of the new pair. Both of them conceived on the same day and gave birth to sons also in the same night. But as Kṛṣṇa was sleeping at that time, the messenger of Rukmiṇī stood at his feet and that of Satyabhāmā near his head to convey the happy tidings to the anxious father. As he opened his eyes he caught sight of the former first and thus Rukmiṇī's son got the status of the eldest prince.[73]

According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* Kṛṣṇa loved Satyabhāmā

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72 *Ibid.* 43. 7-17.

73 *Ibid.* 43. 19-38.

more than Rukmiṇī and Jāmbavatī. She accompanied him to Prāgjyotiṣapura during his expedition against Naraka and then to the capital of Indra. Kṛṣṇa had to fight a war against the latter for satisfying the whim of his favourite wife. She saw the Pārijāta flower tree in Indra's garden and wanted to get it transplanted to Dvārakā. Indra's wife, however, would not agree to it. Ultimately Kṛṣṇa defeated Indra and fulfilled the desire of Satyabhāmā.[74] The *Harivaṁśa* says that once Nārada presented a Pārijāta flower to Rukmiṇī. Seeing this Satyabhāmā insisted that she too must have one. This caused the war with Indra.[75] The *Bhāgavata* does not admit that Kṛṣṇa's wives, could quarrel like the co-wives of an ordinary man. It is, therefore, silent on the Pārijāta incident.

Kṛsṇa could not get any political ally either by his marriage with Rukmiṇī or with Satyabhāmā. He, therefore, tried to gain some friends by matrimonial alliances. The *Bhāgavata* relates how he married Satyā, the daughter of Nagnajit, the ruler of Kośala, by over-powering seven mighty bulls.[76] The Tamil *Prabandham* describes how Kṛṣṇa married Nāppinnāi after a bull-baiting contest, in which he embraced the defeated seven bulls.[77] But when Kṛṣṇa carried off the daughter of his father's sister Rājādhidevī, her sons Vinda and Anubinda, the princes of Avantī, who belonged to the party of Duryōdhana, offered resistance. This marriage too failed to secure the help of a friendly power. Kṛṣṇa married another cousin sister, named Bhadrā, the

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74 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 30.

75 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 65-70.

76 *Bhāgavata*, X. 58. 32-33 and X, 83. 13-14.

77 *Prabandham* 3168. K. R. Srinivasan also refers to a similar description by Appār in *Tevāram* in his *Some aspects of religion as revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South*, P. 16.

daughter of his aunt Śrutakīrti, the queen of Kekaya.[78] He also married Laksmaṇā, the daughter of King of Madra. Akrūra's sister does not figure as one of the principal wives of Kṛṣṇa in the list given in the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*. Though the *Bhāgavata* relates that Kṛṣṇa married two daughters of his two aunts, this is not corroborated by any other *Purāna*.

Some stories, mentioned in the *Varāha Purāṇa*, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and the *Sāmba Upapurāṇa*, indicate that Kṛṣṇa had to face considerable trouble in maintaining decorum among his numerous wives. Thus the *Varāha Purāṇa* states that once Nārada informed Kṛṣṇa that all his sixteen thousand wives were enamoured of Sāmba, who was a paragon of beauty. Nārada also hinted that this has created such a scandal that the gods in the Brahmaloka even talk of this. Kṛṣṇa tried to ascertain the truth of this allegation by asking Sāmba to be present before his wives. Kṛṣṇa saw with his own eyes that deep emotions stirred the mind of his wives on seeing Sāmba. He deplored the fickleness of women. But Nārada insisted that Sāmba was not free from responsibility for this state of affairs and quoted the opinion of the denizens of Satyaloka to the effect that Sāmba had corrupted the wives of Kṛṣṇa. Nārada, therefore, advised Kṛṣṇa to forsake Sāmba. Kṛṣṇa, cursed Sāmba, who was instantly transformed into an ugly leper.[79]

The *Sāmba Purāṇa* states that Nārada had a grievance against Sāmba as the latter did not show him proper respect nor desist from his amorous sports when he paid a visit to Dvārakā. He, therefore, wanted to have him punished. He told Kṛṣṇa that all the sixteen thousand queens were so much enamoured of Sāmba that they were always

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78 *Bhāgavata*, X. 58. 30-56.
79 *Varāha Purāṇa*, Ch. 177.

anxious to meet him. Kṛṣṇa refused to believe this allegation. One day while he was sporting in the pond in the pleasure garden in Raivataka with his wives, who were more or less intoxicated, Nārada managed to call Sāmba there on the pretext that he was required to see his father there. As soon as Sāmba appeared, all the wives excepting Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā and Jāmbavatī became extremely passionate. Kṛṣṇa understood their mental condition at a glance and cursed all excepting the three that they would be carried away by robbers after his death.[80]

Pradyumna and his son Aniruddha too caused at times much worry and anxiety to Kṛṣṇa. It has been seen that Kṛṣṇa got Pradyumna as a son after practising austerities for twelve years.[81] We can easily imagine what grief it caused to Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī when the child was kidnapped by Samvara on the sixth day of his birth according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[82] He came back to Dvārakā after a long period with Māyādevī, Samvara's wife, who had reared him up as her son, but fell in love with him when he attained youth. The *Purāṇas* try to justify her conduct on the ground that she as Rati was the wife of Pradyumna, the Kāma, in her previous birth. In any case she was much older than Pradyumna. Though Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī accepted her as their daughter-in-law, the *Purāṇas* do not mention the name of any of her issues by Pradyumna. Aniruddha was born of Rukmī's daughter. But Pradyumna was like a Don Juan. He fell in love with Prabhāvatī, the daughter of an Asura named Vajranābha. The *Harivaṁśa* describes in great details how Pradyumna and his

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80 *Sāmba Purāṇa*, Ch. 3

81 *Mbh.* XIII. 14. 16.

82 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 27. 3. The *Harivaṁśa* says that Pradyumna was stolen on the seventh night.

kinsmen gained access to the capital of Vajranābha in the guise of a theatrical party, staged there dramas on the themes like the Descent of the Ganges and Abduction of Rambhā and ultimately succeeded in seducing Prabhāvatī. He has helped by his brothers and uncles in this venture.[83]

The brother of Vajranābha avenged the wrong by abducting a Yādava maiden, daughter of Bhānu.[84] This Bhānu was probably the same as the eldest son of Satyabhāmā.[85] She was, therefore, a grand-daughter of Kṛṣṇa, who rescued her with the help of Arjuna. She was married to Arjuna's brother, Sahadeva.[86]

Aniruddha caused no less anxiety to Kṛsna. Following the footsteps of his father he fell in love with Uṣā, the daughter of the Asura King Bāṇa. He was caught red-handed by the Asuras. Kṛṣṇa had to go out on an expedition to Śoṇitapura to rescue him.[87] This incident must have taken place before the Bhārata War because we find Bhīṣma referring to the destruction of Bāṇa and Naraka by Vāsudeva in the *Udyoga parvan.*[88]

According to the *Skanda Purāṇa* Kṛṣṇa played the role of a match-maker in negotiating the marriage of Bhīma's son Ghaṭōtkaca with the daughter of Mura Dānava, whom he had killed.[89] Later on Ghaṭōtkaca paid a visit to Dvārakā with his son Barbarika, who enquired from Kṛṣṇa the means of attaining beatitude.

The same *Purāṇa* relates a curious story regarding the strange behaviour of the sage Durvāsā. He was welcomed

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83 *Hārivaṁśa*, 91. 46-53 ; 93. 6-26.

84 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 90. 2 and 90. 68.

85 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 32. 1.

86 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 90. 76.

87 *Harivaṃśa*, II. 116-128.

88 *Mbh.* V. 61. 11.

89 *Skanda, Maheśvarakhaṇḍa, Kumārikākhaṇḍa*, Ch. 61.

by Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī to Dvārakā, but he refused to ride on the chariot drawn by horses. He asked them to dismiss the horses and draw the chariot themselves. They did so, lest Durvāsā became angry. But poor Rukmiṇī felt thirsty and drank a glass of water without asking the permission of the sage. At this the latter flared up and cursed that she would be separated from Kṛṣṇa.[90]

The *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* has also got a strange story to tell. One day Pradyumna felt very much annoyed with the behaviour of the Brāhmanas and came to complain to his father. Kṛṣṇa related to him how he had tolerated all the pranks of Durvāsā when he was offered accommodation in Dvārakā. Sometimes he would eat food sufficient for many thousand persons, sometimes very little. Once he burnt all the beds and coverlets and all the well-adorned damsels and then went out. He asked for rice-milk which Kṛṣṇa had kept ready anticipating his demand. He ate some and ordered Kṛṣṇa to smear his (Kṛṣṇa's) limbs with the remnant. He smeared every part of the body excepting his feet. Then the sage caused Rukmiṇī to be yoked to a chariot, got up on it and striking her with the hook proceeded along the high road. The Daśārhas became angry, and as Rukmiṇī tottered, he struck her with the whip. Then he leapt down from the chariot and fled towards the south on foot. But Kṛṣṇa followed him. Then he became gratified because Kṛṣṇa had completely subdued anger. He blessed Kṛṣṇa who found his body endowed with great beauty and splendour. He also blessed Rukmiṇī saying: "Thou shalt be the foremost of women in fame, free from decrepitude or diseases or loss of complexion, possessed of a fragrant odour,

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90 *Skanda, Prabhāsakhaṇḍa, Dvārakāmāhātmya*, Ch. 2.

the foremost of Kṛṣṇa's sixty thousand wives."[91] As Kṛṣṇa did not smear his feet with rice milk, he was struck at in that portion of his body by the hunter.

Fantastic though the story might appear to be, it is full of great significance. Kṛṣṇa is treated here as a human being and not as God. The Brāhmaṇa writer of the epic inculcated the doctrine that all the whims of a Brāhmaṇa should be tolerated. Lastly, the number of wives of Kṛṣṇa here is said to be sixty thousand and not sixteen thousand and one hundred and eight.

Whatever might have been the number of his wives, he allowed a host of public women to reside in his city. The *Harivaṁśa* naively writes that Kṛṣṇa allowed these women to entertain the Yādavas so that there might not arise any feud amongst them on account of women.[92] The *Uttarakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* states that once upon a time the wives of Devas and Gandharvas laughted at Aṣṭāvakra, who cursed them that they would become prostitutes. When they expressed regret and prayed to the sage for mitigation of the penalty, he said that they would have the privilege of serving the Yādavas.[93]

The Yādavas, according to the *Harivaṁśa*, used to take these women to the sea-side along with their wives, brothers, sons and grandsons and amuse themselves with water-sports, drinking and eating. In one passage, the sons of Kṛṣṇa and the chiefs of the family are described to have discarded all their cloths and ornaments while engaged in the water-sport in the sea.[94] Men as well as women amongst the Yādavas were addicted to drinking. Āhuka had to prohibit

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91 *Mahābhārata*, XIII. 159, Cal. ed. 7382 ff.
92 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 88. 10.
93 *Padma Purāṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa*, 252. 96.
94 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 89. 41.

the people of Dvārakā on pain of death from manufacturing wine when the Yādavas were under the curse of the sages.[95]

Aśvaghoṣa says that the Vṛṣṇi-Andhakas were destroyed on account of their addiction to drink.[96] This is corroborated by the *Jātakas*[97] and the *Divyāvadāna*.[98] It may be mentioned in this connection that Krsna and the members of his family were not vegetarians. In the *Harivaṁśa*, they are described as partaking of the meat of birds, deer and buffalo.[99] Vālmīki too describes Rāmacandra as a meat-eater.[100]

The story of the destruction of the Yādavas has been related in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, though not in the *Harivaṁśa*. Kauṭilya alludes to the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis on account of insulting the sage Dvaipāyana.[101]

The Jaina *Harivaṁśa* also states that it was the wrath of the sage Dvaipāyana which brought about the destruction of the Yādavas.[102] The *Mahābhārata* and the *Visnu Purāna* say that the sages who took offence at the joke played upon them were Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada.[103] The *Bhāgavata*, however, relates that the sages who cursed the Yādava princes were Viśvāmitra, Asita, Kaṇva, Durvāsā, Bhṛgu, Aṅgirā, Kaśyapa, Vāmadeva, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Nārada and others.[104]

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95 *Mahābhārata*, XVI. 1. 28.
96 Aśvaghoṣa, *Buddhacarita*, XI. 31.
97 *Jātaka*, XVII. 18.
98 *Divyāvadāna*, 560. 20.
99 *Harivaṁśa*, 89. 57 ff.
100 Vālmiki, *Rāmāyaṇa*, III. 47. 22.
101 *Arthaśāstra*, I. 6. 3.
102 Jaina *Harivaṁśa*, p. 762.
103 *Mahābhārata*, XVI. 1 ; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 37.
104 *Bhāgavata*, XI. 1.

The *Mahābhārata* gives the most poignant account of the civil war which destroyed the Yādavas. They went to Prabhāsa on the orders of Kṛṣṇa. As Prabhāsa was not a dry area they began to take wine to their heart's content. The Vṛṣṇis mixed with spirits the food that had been cooked for the Brāhmaṇas and gave it to apes. Under the influence of liquor Sātyaki blamed Kṛtavarman for the slaughter at night. He was applauded by Pradyumna. But Kṛtavarman rebuked Sātyaki for killing Bhūriśravas in an unjustifiable way. Sātyaki now related the story of the gem Syamantaka and murder of Satrājit. Satyabhāmā, weeping, approached Kṛṣṇa and sitting on his lap enhanced his anger. Sātyaki swore that he would kill Kṛtavarman, who had slain the five sons of Draupadī with the help of Aśvatthāmā and he severed his head in the very sight of Kṛṣṇa. He then began to strike down others. Kṛṣṇa rushed forward to prevent him from doing further mischief. Meanwhile the Bhojas and Andhakas assailed Sātyaki and struck him with the pots from which they had been eating. Pradyumna rushed forward to save him but both were killed. Kṛṣṇa now began to kill all those who came before him. Now son killed father and vice versa. When Kṛṣṇa saw that his brother Gada, son Sāmba and grandson Aniruddha had been slain, he exterminated the Vṛṣṇis and the Andhakas.[105] Kṛṣṇa then went away and found that Balarāma had given up his life in Yoga posture. He wandered for some time and then sat down. The hunter Jarā, mistaking him for a deer, pierced him at the heel with an arrow. The hunter coming up saw a man dressed in yellow robes, rapt in Yoga, with many arms. He became

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105 *Mahābhārata*, XVI. 3.

filled with fear. Kṛṣṇa comforted him and ascended upwards.[106]

The death of Kṛṣṇa, too, appears to have been a part of the civil war. The *Harivaṁśa* says that Jarā was born of a Śūdra wife of Vasudeva and that he became a king of the Niṣādas.[107]

After the death of Kṛṣṇa, Rukmiṇī and Jāmbavatī ascended the funeral pyre with him. But Satyabhāmā took to an ascetic life and entered the forest.[108]

From a careful perusal of all the source materials on the life of Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā it becomes quite evident that he was regarded by his kinsmen as a leader, endowed with exceptional mental and physical powers, but not as an incarnation of God. The attitude of Akrūra and Kṛtavarman towards him in the long-drawn struggle over the Syamantaka gem and the conduct of his cousin brothers, Siśupāla and Dantavakra and of his sons and grandsons, especially at Raivataka and Prabhāsa, show that they seldom manifested the awe and reverence or the spirit of complete self-surrender which are usually evoked when one comes in contact with God. The *Bhāgavata* regrets that the Yādavas were the most unfortunate beings, because they failed to recognise him as God, though they lived with him.[109] There is hardly any evidence in favour of Barth's theory that Kṛṣṇa was 'probably at first the *Kuladevatā*, the ethnic god, of some powerful confederation of Rājput clans.'[110]

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106 *Ibid.*, XVI. 4. The *Uttarakhṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* states that the wine, sent by Indra, made Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna and others very much intoxicated and they began to strike at one another as a result of which all died (252. 69).

107 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 103. 27.

108 *Mahābhārata*, XIV. 7.

109 *Bh.* III. 2. 8-11.

110 Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 168.

Chapter V

RĀDHĀ

Rādhā is inextricably associated with Kṛṣṇa in the *Paurāṇic* and secular literature, sculpture, painting and even in two of the epigraphic records belonging to the first millennium. Historians regard the *Matsya Purāṇa* along with the *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇas* as four of the oldest among the extant *Purāṇas*. The *Vāmana Purāṇa*[1] and the *Devībhāgavata*[2] regard the *Matsya Purāṇa* as the chief of all the *Purāṇas*. *Rōdhā*, identified with Devī Dākṣāyaṇī, is mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa*[3] as the presiding deity (*adhīśvarī*) of Vṛndāvana just as Rukmiṇī is the supreme goddess of Dvārakā. This verse has been quoted by Jīva Gosvāmin in 1578 in his *Laghu Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*[4] commentary of the *Bhāgavata* and by P. V. Kane in 1953 in his *History of Dharmaśāstra*.[5] It may, therefore, be accepted as a genuine verse and not an interpolation.

Another verse implying the supremacy of Viśālākṣī at Vārāṇasī, Vimalā at Purī, Rukmiṇī at Dvārakā and Rādhā at Vṛndāvana has been quoted by Jīva Gosvāmin from the *Skanda Purāṇa* in his *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*.[6]

The earliest reference to Rādhikā in purely secular literature is to be found in the *Gāthāsaptaśatī* attributed to Hāla. A particle of dust raised by the hoofs of cows has fallen into the eye of Rādhikā. Kṛṣṇa took care to

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1 *Vāmana Purāṇa*, 21. 48.
2 *Devī-Bhāgavata*, I. 3.
3 *Matsya Purāṇa*, 13. 38.
4 *Laghu Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, X. 21. 17.
5 *H D S*, IV, p. 691.
6 *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, Sec. 189.

blow it off. The verse says that by this action Kṛṣṇa destroyed the pride or superiority-complex of the other Gopīs.[7] This shows that about the time of composition of this couplet, Rādhā had been recognised as the most-beloved Gopī.

It is curious to note that Varāhamihira in his *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* refers to the worship of Sāmba and Pradyumna along with their wives, but does not associate either Rādhā, Rukmiṇī or Satyabhāmā with Kṛṣṇa or Sītā with Rāma. Thus the noted astronomer writes in the sixth century that the only lady to be shown in the company of Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva was goddess Ekānaṁśā, the girl who was exchanged for Kṛṣṇa by Vasudeva and dashed on the stone by Kaṁsa. "Goddess Ekānaṁśā", prescribes the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, "should be situated between Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa, with her left hand placed on the hip and the other hand holding a lotus. Sāmba should be made with a mace in his hand, Pradyumna endowed with a charming body, with a bow in his hand. Their wives also should be made holding swords and shield in their hand."[8] The last observation

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7 *Gāthāsaptaśati*, I. 5. 89.

There is good deal of controversy regarding the date of compilation of this anthology. The older view was that its date could not be earlier than the third and later than the fifth century. Bāṇa has referred to it as the *Kośa* of songs by Sātavāhana. D. R. Bhandarkar held that as Rādhikā is mentioned in the *Pañcatantra* in the fifth century A.D., this anthology containing verses on Rādhā must have been compiled at the beginning of the sixth century A. D. (R. G. Bhandarkar Com. Vol., p. 189). But this is a very weak argument. Another scholar has pointed out that the anthology contains verses by Devarāja (400-425 A.D.) and Vākpatirāja (715-750 A.D.). But in view of Bāṇa's evidence we may consider the insertion of poem by Vākpatirāja as an interpolation. There are as many as seven recensions of the *Gāthāsaptaśatī*.

8 *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, LVIII. 37 and 40.

probably indicates that according to tradition coming down from days of yore even the ladies of the Yādava family were accustomed to fight.

In the seventh century sculpture, however, we find Rādhā associated with Kṛṣṇa as object of veneration. The figure to the left of Kṛṣṇa at the Maṇḍapa at Mahabalipuram may or may not be Rādhā, but there are several reasons for identifying the Paharpur sculpture No. 22 as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. K. N. Dikshit points out that the proximity of this piece to the figures of Yamunā and Balarāma raised "the strong presumption that the divine pair is associated with Balarāma and the river Yamunā—the scene of Kṛṣṇa's early activity. It cannot also be said that the female here represents one of the Gopīs or cowherdesses with whom boy Kṛṣṇa sported, for the halo behind the head indicates for certain that the female was of a divine character. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that this sculpture was meant to represent Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, the latter being the only female associated with Kṛṣṇa, for whom he showed a special preference owing to her heavenly character. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* in which the Rādhā legend occurs for the first time is undoubtedly later than the 7th century, to which the sculpture is to be attributed."[9] While agreeing with the observations made by the former Director-General of Archaeology, we may venture to point out that the legend of Rādhā occurs in the earlier *Padma Purāṇa* and also in the Tamil work, *Śilappadikāram* which has been assigned to the second century A.D. by Dikshitar and to 465 A.D. by another writer on the basis of the astronomical data contained in the book itself.[10]

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9 K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, p. 44.

10 *Journal of the Mythic Society* (Culture and Heritage number), 1956. The *Śilappadikāram* (XI. 35-51) refers to the recumbent form of Viṣṇu

The Tamil classic mentions Rādhā as Nāppinnāi, or simply Pinnāi and Yaśodā as Aśodāi as the following quotation from it will clearly show :—"Is this the lord who eats good food Kṛṣṇa with the colour of the newly opened Kayā flower, nursed by Aśodāi in the village of cowherds? Is this lady with many shoulder-bracelets, the brightest lamp of our community, who gave succour to the Lord of the blue gem on the banks of the river Yamunā?"[11] According to the Tamil tradition this Pinnāi was the wife of Kṛṣṇa. We find in the *Śilappadikāram* a clear mention of this relationship. The milkmaids are described as saying "we shall sing of the charming beauty of Pinnāi as she danced with her husband on the banks of the Yamunā."[12] They are full of praise for the great dexterity shown by Pinnāi at the *Kuravai* dance. Pinnāi was considered a divine because we find her friends mentioning the fact that among her choristers "is the Vedic bard Nārada, who keeps correct time to her strains by playing upon the first string."[13] With the evident touch of jealousy they ask : "Is Pinnāi of bangled arms so beautiful that he who had won great reputation by measuring the universe, would not look at Lakṣmī dwelling in his own breast?"[14]

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on the serpent couch in Śrīraṅgam and also to the standing form of Viṣṇu in Teruvenganam. K. R. Srinivasan holds that these references show that the work must have been written at a late date (*Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments*, p. 16). But our experience of the study of religious literature of Bengal shows that the votaries of some temples occasionally interpolated passages in some well known works with a view to proving the antiquity of their favourite place of worship.

11 V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Śilappadikāram* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), XVI. 40-53.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 234.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

This sort of statement, derogatory to Lakṣmī, is found also in an inscription of Vākpati Muñja dated *Samvat* 1031 corresponding to 974 A.D. The second verse purports to say : "May the active body of the enemy of Mura, which the face of Lakṣmī could not please, which the waters of the ocean could not cool, which the lotus of the lake of his own navel was powerless to pacify, and which could not be soothed by the fragrant breath issuing from the thousand mouths of Śeṣa...that body of Kṛṣṇa, so heated by Rādhā's separation, protect you."[15] The same benedictory verse occurs also in the inscriptions of the same monarch dated 982 and 986 A.D. An inscribed fragmentary stone-piece from Mandor belonging to the eighth or ninth century A.D. refers to Hari having heard the words of Rādhikā at Gokula (*Gopigiran Gokule śrutvā Rādhikayā svabhūṣaṇvidhiḥ saureḥ kṛtaḥ pāninānganne.... rūpam Hari pātu vaḥ*).[16]

The 'Textus simplicitor' of the *Pañcatantra* has got a satirical tale called the Weaver as Viṣṇu,[17] in which we find allusion to Rādhā. A weaver falls in love with a beautiful princess. His friend, a car-wright, makes a flying wooden Garuḍa for him, and assuming the guise of Viṣṇu he enters the room of the princess through a window. The princess told him that she was not fit to be the consort of the holy lord of the three worlds. The weaver, however, replied with ready wit that she was the incarnation of Rādhā who had been his wife at Gokula and that is why he came to her. The princess believed in him and granted his wishes. The *Pañcatantra* was translated in the Pahlavi language in the sixth century A.D., but it is difficult to ascertain

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15 *Ind. Ant.*, VI, p. 50 ; *E.I.*, XXIII, p. 108.

16 R. C. Agrawala, *Proc. of the Ind. Hist. Congress*, 1954, p. 163.

17 *Pañcatantra*, I. 5.

whether this particular story formed a part of the original book. Winternitz is inclined to treat it as a later addition.

In the Sanskrit and Prakrit literature of the eighth century we find two clear references to Rādhā. The *Gauḍavahokāvya* of Vākpati alludes to the marks made on the chest of Kṛṣṇa by the nails and bangles of Rādhā.[18] Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa in the prefatory verse of his drama, entitled *Veṇīsaṁhāra*, prays for the welfare of his audience to that Kṛṣṇa who had to solicit the favour of his beloved Rādhā, who had shed tears and became cross with him for being forsaken on the bank of the Yamunā at the time of *Rāsa*. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has been quoted by Vāmana and Ānandavardhana. He, therefore, must have flourished in the middle of the eighth century at the latest. Some scholars think that, though Kṛṣṇa is here definitely regarded as a divinity, Rādhā was a mere lady-love of his. There are hundreds of benedictory verses in which the blessings of Śiva have been invoked and some incident reflecting his love for Pārvatī has been mentioned. Nobody suggests that in such passages Pārvatī is not to be regarded as a goddess. The benedictory verse of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa shows the influence of the *Rāsalīlā* episode related in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata*. The *Harivaṁśa*[19] describes the *Rāsalīlā* briefly and refers to the imitation of Kṛṣṇa's activities by the Gopīs[20] indeed, but the sudden disappearance of Kṛṣṇa from their company has not been alluded to in it. In one verse,[21] Kṛṣṇa is described to have exclaimed 'Hā, Heti', and Nīlakaṇṭha, the seventeenth century Maharastrian commentator, explains it as Kṛṣṇa calling for Rādhā, and Candramukhī or Rādhā

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18 *Gauḍavahokāvya*, I. V. 22.
19 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 21. 15-35.
20 *Ibid.*, II. 21. 26.
21 *Ibid.*, II. 21. 33.

having the face like the moon. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* definitely shows that one Gopī was loved by Kṛṣṇa more dearly than the rest. While the Gopīs were searching for Kṛṣṇa, one damsel detected the impression of Kṛṣṇa's feet on the ground bearing the marks of the banner, the thunderbolt and the goad. She then exclaimed : "Some fortunate damsel, inebriate with passion, has gone with him because here are the marks of her light steps." "Here Dāmodara has gathered flowers from on high, for we see alone the impressions of the tips of his feet. Here *Kvacit*, some damsel (it must refer to the one who has accompanied him) has sat down with him, ornamented with flowers, fortunate in having propitiated Viṣṇu in a prior existence. Having left her in an arrogant mood, because he had offered her flowers, the son of Nanda has gone by this road ; for see, unable to follow him with equal steps, his associate has here tripped along upon her toes, and holding his hand, the damsel has passed, as is evident from the uneven and intermingled footsteps. But the rogue (*Dhūrtta*) has merely taken her hand, and left her neglected, for here the paces indicate the path of a person in despair. Undoubtedly he promised that he would quickly come again, for here are his own footsteps returning with speed. Here he has entered the thick forest, impervious to the rays of the moon, and his steps can be traced no farther." "When Kṛṣṇa re-appeared amongst the Gopīs, one of them could articulate only one single word 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa' ; another affected to contract her forehead with frowns and another closing her eyelids contemplated internally his form."[22]

The second one who could dare to frown even on the lord of three worlds has been interpreted by Sanātana Gosvāmin, the sixteenth century commentator of the

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22 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 13. 44-46.

Bhāgavata, as Rādhā.[23] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* gives a more graphic picture of her mental condition when it says that she being overwhelmed with loving rage frowned, pressed her lips with her teeth and belaboured her lover as it were with her side-long glances.[24] It is not correct to hold that no Gopī had been given prominence in the *Bhāgavata*.[25] The commentators belonging to the school of Caitanya explain that it is with this Gopī that Kṛṣṇa vanished from others, and the latter enviously said that Kṛṣṇa must have been propitiated by her.[26] It must have been this one who in her extreme annoyance with the shabby treatment she had received from her lover cast furious glances at him. Then again when Kṛṣṇa sent Uddhava to enquire about the welfare of the people of Vraja, other Gopīs asked how was Kṛṣṇa faring, but one Gopī was much beside her senses at the pang of separation that she mistook a black bee to be a messenger despatched by Kṛṣṇa and addressed to him ten verses.[27] Sanātana Gosvāmī in his commentary of the *Bhāgavata* quotes two stanzas and a half from the *Āgneya* to prove that she was no other than Rādhā. These verses cannot be traced in the extant printed editions of the *Agni Purāṇa*. But these were certainly found in some recensions of that *Purāṇa* at the beginning of the sixteenth century, because no one can accuse Sanātana Gosvāmin of fabrication. The same verse has been quoted by Jīva

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23 *Bṛhat-Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇi*, X. 32. 8.

24 *Ibid.*, X. 32. 6.

25 Dr. Asoka Majumdar holds that in the *Bhāgavata* Kṛṣṇa's relation with the Gopis has been 'with an entire corporate body' and that later explanation of Rādhā being the chief Gopi is foreign to the spirit of the *Bhāgavata* (*ABORI*, Vol. 36, pp. 236 and 250).

26 *Bhāgavata*, X. 30. 28.

27 *Ibid.*, X. 47. 12-21.

Gosvāmin in his *Prītisandarbha*[28] with the words that these have been quoted in the *Vāsanābhāṣya*. It cannot be denied, however, that the name of Rādhā has not been directly mentioned in the *Bhāgavata*. A student of history would say that when the *Bhāgavata* was written in its present form sometime in the sixth century A.D. the chief *Śakti*, consort or favourite of Kṛṣṇa was called by some as Nāppināi, Pinnāi, Rāhiā, Rādhā or Rādhikā and the *Bhāgavata* preferred to follow the lead of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* in remaining silent over the name. But in less than two hundred years the cult of Rādhā became so very popular that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa invoked the blessings of Kṛṣṇa craving forgiveness from Rādhā for deserting her in *Rāsalīlā*. Had the *Bhāgavata* been composed after the *Veṇīsaṁhāra* the name of Rādhā would have been distinctly mentioned in it. It has been argued that Śrīdhara Svāmin, who probably flourished in the 13th century as he has been quoted by Hemādri in his commentary on Vopadeva's *Muktāphala*, has not mentioned Rādhā in his commentary on the 28th verse of the 30th Chapter of the *Bhāgavata*. But this does not signify much, because Śrīdhara did not like to make explicit which was implicit. Nimbārka, who has been assigned to the middle of the twelfth century by Dr. D.C. Sircar, unequivocally pays homage to Rādhā in his *Vedāntakāmadhenu* as that daughter of Vṛṣabhānu who constantly remains to the left of the Lord, who is served by thousands of her female companions. Nimbārka adores her as one who fulfills all the desires and who is as unique in her beauty and fortune as her beloved.* It is, therefore, not correct to say that Rādhā

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28 *Pritisandarbha*, Sec. 109.

* अंगे तु वामे वृषभानुजां मुदा
विराजमानामनुरूप सौभगाम्।

leapt up into prominence on the advent of Caitanya or that the latter got the idea of her importance from Rāmānanda Rāi. The fact is that the associates of Caitanya considered him as being born with the sentiments and effulgence of beauty of Rādhā. They, therefore, made in the sixteenth century a far more diligent search for the scriptural references to Rādhā than what the research scholars of the twentieth century are accustomed to do.

Sanātana Gosvāmī, who is described as an erudite scholar even before his meeting with Caitanya and who threw off the high post of Counsellor and Private Secretary to Sultān Alauddīn Hussain Shāh, was the first to take up this task. He wrote the *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛta* even during the life time of Caitanya as he himself explains in the commentary to that book written by himself.[29] In this work[30] he refers to the previous birth of Rādhā as described in the *Kārttikamāhātmya* of the *Padma Purāṇa*.

Jīva Gosvāmin, the nephew of Sanātana, actually quotes many of the important references to Rādhā. In his *Śrīkṛṣṇasandarbha*,[31] he quotes a verse from the *Kārttika-māhātmya* implying that Kṛṣṇa handed over the sovereignty of Vṛndāvana to Rādhā. He also quotes as *Śruti* a verse of the *Ṛk. Pariśiṣṭa* which states that amongst their own people Rādhā shines in the company of Mādhava and Mādhava in the company of Rādhā.* The antiquity of this

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सखीसहस्रैः परिसेवितां सदा
स्मरेम देवीं सकलेष्टकामदाम्।
(5th *Śloka* in the *Daśaśloki*).

29 Commentary on *Bṛhat-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, I. 1. 3.

30 *Ibid.*, II. 2. 206-208.

31 *Śrīkṛṣṇasandarbha*, Sec. 189.

* राधया माधवो देवो माधवेनैव राधिका
विभ्रजन्ते जनेष्वा ॥

Śruti, however, is unknown. In this commentary on the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*,[32] he quotes another verse of the *Kārttikamāhātmya* in the *Padma Purāṇa* which has already been quoted by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Mathurāmāhātmya*. It says that, as Rādhā is dearest to Viṣṇu amongst all the Gopīs, so is her *Kuṇḍa* or lake dear to Him.

Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted two other verses on Rādhākuṇḍa—one from the *Ādi-Varāha*, which is also found in the extant *Varāha Purāṇa*[33] and another from the *Mathurākhaṇḍa*. It is noteworthy that Lakṣmīdhara in his *Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*[34] has also quoted a verse regarding the sanctity of Rādhākuṇḍa from the *Varāha Purāṇa*. This shows that long long before Jayadeva, a place of pilgrimage associated with the name of Rādhā had arisen. Jīva Gosvāmin also quotes a verse from the *Bṛhat-Gautamīya-Tantra* which implies that Rādhikā is the supreme goddess and she is full of Kṛṣṇa and Lakṣmī.[35]

He has also quoted in his *Prītisandarbha*[36] a verse from the *Ādi Purāṇa* which states that amongst the three worlds this earth is blessed, and in it Vṛndāvana, therein the Gopīs

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32 *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, p. 4.

33 *Varāha Purāṇa*, Ch. 164. 34.

34 *Tirthavivecanakāṇḍa* (G.O.S.), p. 190. Dr. R. C. Hazra (*The Upapurāṇas*, Vol. I) unnecessarily suspects that narration of the sacredness of places associated with Kṛṣṇa in the *Varāha Purāṇa* was probably an interpolation, made by the followers of Caitanya. But Lakṣmīdhara has quoted many of these verses from the *Varāha Purāṇa* more than 350 years before the birth of Caitanya. The verse on Rādhākuṇḍa is found in all the manuscripts of his *Tirthavivecanakāṇḍa*. But in the *Ms.* of the Bhonsle Library this verse has been penned through with red ink by some body, who probably thought that the verse was an interpolation.

35 Quoted by Jīva in the *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, Sec. 189; *Prītisandarbha*, Section 108 and commentary on the *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, p. 4.

36 *Prītisandarbha*, Sec. 108.

and amongst the Gopīs she whose name is Rādhā. Jīva Gosvāmin had to ransack the *Purāṇas* for finding out the antiquity of the name of Rādhā and her associates like Lalitā, Śyāmalā, Dhanyā, Viśākhā, Śaivyā, Padmā and Bhadrā, each of whom addressed a verse deprecating Kṛṣṇa before Uddhava who had been sent to Vṛndāvana by the latter as described in the *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* in its *Dvārakāmāhātmya* section. These verses are quoted by him in his commentary on the *Bhāgavata* (X.39.7). These can be traced in the printed editions of the *Skanda Purāṇa*.[37] Sanātana in his *Bṛhat-Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*[38] writes a verse offering salutation to Candrāvalī, Bhadrā, Padmā, Śaivyā, Śyāmā, Viśākhā, Lalitā and Rādhā. He substitutes here the name of Dhanyā by that of Candrāvalī of the *Skanda Purāṇa* verses referred to above. Jīva had to refer to the *Malladvādaśī* section of the *Uttarakhaṇḍa* of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and to the *Prahlādasaṁhitā* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa* for proving the antiquity of Rādhā in his *Prītisandarbha*.[38] It is worth investigating why he did not cite any verse from the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* in which Rādhikā is described as the *Mūlaprakṛti* and Lalitā and others as her parts.[39]

In the earlier part of the *Haribhaktivilāsa*, Rādhā's name does not occur at all. While prescribing the method of meditation[40] it speaks of Kṛṣṇa surrounded by the Gopas and Gopīs in general, but does not mention Rādhā specifically. It is only in the seventh section[41] of the book

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37 *Skanda Purāṇa*, (Venkatesvara ed.), p. 292 and Vaṅgabāsi ed., p. 5295.

38 *Prītisandarbha*, Sec. 285.

39 *Padma Purāṇa* (Anandasrama ed.), Ch. 70 ; Vaṅgabāsi ed., Ch. 39.

40 *Haribhaktivilāsa*, VI. 120-131.

41 *Ibid.*, VII. 124.

that for the first time meditation on the Gopīs headed by Rādhā is prescribed for the *Ekāntina* devotees. Possibly the author intended to exclude the ordinary devotees from the meditation of Rādhā. The fifteenth section describes how the birthdays of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were to be observed. But it is silent about the birth day of Rādhā or the *Rādhāstamī*. It is in the sixteenth section that the worship of Rādhā along with Dāmodara has been prescribed.[42] But curiously enough verses from the *Padma Purāṇa* have been quoted to show that in the month of *Kārttika* a Brāhmaṇa should be regarded as Dāmodara and his wife as Rādhikā and the couple should be honoured with clothes, ornaments and food. It quotes the *Dāmodarāṣṭaka* from the *Padma Purāṇa* and in it occurs the salutation to Rādhikā, the beloved of Dāmodara.[43] It cites the same *Purāṇa* as the proof of sanctity of the Rādhākuṇḍa, a dip in which on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of *Kārttika* is highly pleasing to Hari.[44] Sanātana Gosvāmī in his commentary on the *Haribhaktivilāsa* refers to the story related in the *Padma Purāṇa* about the previous birth of Rādhā, in which she was an Apsarā named Candrakānti and secured a boon from Brahmā to the effect that she would become dearest to Kṛṣṇa. Sanātana remarks that though Rādhā is naturally and eternally the best beloved of Kṛṣṇa yet, to avoid the jealousy of others, she appeared to have turned the boon of Brahmā to reality.

Rāghava Paṇḍita, who has been referred to in the *Gauraganoddeśadīpikā* of Kavi Karṇapūra as the author of the *Bhaktiratnaprakāśa* and a contemporary of Caitanya, quotes the authority not only of the *Padma Purāṇa* but also

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42 *Ibid.*, XVI. 94-95.
43 *Ibid.*, XVI. 104.
44 *Ibid.*, XVI. 105

of the *Sammohana Tantra*, *Kṛṣṇa Yamala*, and *Varāhasaṁhitā* for proving the prevalence of the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in older times. From the *Padma Purāṇa*, he quotes a verse implying that Rādhā is the primeval power, she remains in half the body of Mukunda ; she is well-behaved, well-mannered and chaste and that she delights in Vṛndāvana.[45] The *Sammohana Tantra* has been cited to prove that both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are full of supreme bliss and that they are not subject to *physical laws of body*.[46] The same *Tantra* has been quoted to show that the devotee should meditate on Kṛṣṇa as embraced by Rādhā. The nineteenth section of the *Kṛṣṇa Yamala* has been quoted to describe how Vasudeva, the ruler of Dvārakā, came to Vṛndāvana with the help of Tripurasundarī to see Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He had to take a dip in the Rādhākuṇḍa by which he was transformed into a woman named Śyāmā. She was conducted before Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa whom she found in close embrace with each other. Several verses from the *Varāhasaṁhitā* are quoted to prove that Rādhikā is the dear and *Ādyāprakṛti* of the Lord.[47] Though Rāghava Paṇḍita had to cite references from works which have become rather obscure at present, neither he nor any of the Gosvāmīs did quote from the so-called *Rādhikātāpanīya Upaniṣad* attributed to the *Atharvaveda* or from the apocryphal *Rādhopaniṣad*. These have now been printed ; but probably they did not exist in the sixteenth century.

The chief incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa have been described in the *Uttarakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* and this part of the *Purāṇa* has been quoted many times by the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. The hymn of the thousand names

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45 *Bhaktiratnaprakāśa*, edited by Haridasa Das, p. 117.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 39 and 117.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

of Viṣṇu occurs in the *Uttarakhaṇḍa*;[48] but Rādhā has not been referred to there. It is only the *Kārttikamāhātmya* section[49] which refers to the worship of Kṛṣṇa along with Rādhā.[50] Curiously enough the *Śabdakalpadruma* has quoted many verses on the Rādhā-Janmāṣṭamī from Chapters 162 and 163 of the *Uttarakhaṇḍa*; but they are not traceable in the printed editions of that section, though available in Ch. 40 of the *Svargakhaṇḍa* which is equivalent to Ch. 4 of *Brahmakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa.*

Gopālabhaṭṭa has quoted profusely from Chapters 84 to 94 and 96 of the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*; but neither he nor any other Gosvāmī has ever quoted a single verse from Ch. 52 (Vaṅgabāsī ed., equivalent to Ch. 83 of the Ānandāśrama ed.) which prescribes how one has to consider himṣelf as a beautiful young damsel, waiting upon Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa. It is bewildering indeed to consider why the Gosvāmīs did not refer to these verses while they were prescribing the *sādhanā* according to *Mañjarībhāva*, that is, as young girls attached to the *Sakhīs* (Lady companions) of Rādhā.

The way in which the Chapters relating to Rādhā, and Vṛndāvana have been interposed in the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* between the chapters describing events of Rāma's life is highly suspicious. Chapters 1 to 37 (Vaṅgabāsī ed. = 32 to 68 of Ānandāśrama ed.) deal exclusively with Rāma, ending in his meeting with Sītā at the hermitage of Vālmīki. Then come Chapters 38 to 52 which are concerned with *Kṛṣṇalīlā.* Again Chapters 63 to the end, that is, up to Ch. 72, describe Rāma's life. It can not be contended, however, that all these chapters are interpolations, because the Gosvāmīs have

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48 *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, Ch. 71.
49 *Ibid.*, *Kārttikamāhātmya*, Ch. 93, p. 346.
50 *Ibid.*, Ch. 93. 10.

quoted some prose passages relating to the killing of Dantavakra in Ch. 45. It is, therefore, necessary to give a bird's eye view of all these Chapters. Chapter 38 describes the 12 forests of the Mathurā region. Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Mathurāmāhātmya* cites verses from the *Ādi Varāha*, and the *Mathurākhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, for these twelve forests. He does not quote from the *Padma Purāṇa*. Chapter 39 describes the Yogapīṭha, the eight petals of the thousand-petalled lotus-like Mathurā and though this is an essential element of the method of worshipping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, yet no verse from this section has been cited by any of the six Gosvāmīs. Chapter 40 describes how Nārada found in the house of Bhānu or Vṛṣabhānu a blind, deaf and paralytic girl, who was no other than Rādhā. Nārada prayed to her in solitude and learnt that he would be in a position to see Rādhā at midnight with the Gopīs in the Kusumasarovara, which lies at present midway between the Rādhākuṇḍa and Govardhana town. Chapter 41 relates that the Gopīs in their previous births were sages. A prince named Citradhvaja, son of king Candraprabha, attained the highest realisation only when he got the form of a maiden named Citrakalā. He was born as the daughter of the cowherd Vīragupta. Chapter 42 describes the holiness of Mathurā and asserts that the Gopīs were *śrutis*. It mentions the name of Bhūteśvara Śiva as the presiding deity of Mathurā and yet Rūpa Gosvāmī does not quote the passage in his *Mathurāmāhātmya*. Chapter 43 relates the curious incident of Arjuna's transformation as a woman by the grace of Tripurasundarī and his or her sexual union with Kṛṣṇa (43. 189). Chapter 44 similarly tells us how Nārada got the form of a woman and enjoyed intercourse with Kṛṣṇa continuously for one year (44.42). The clear implication of these Chapters is that none could become an ardent devotee of God without securing a female form. Neither the

Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana nor their disciples, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Narottama Ṭhākur, who popularised their teachings in Bengal, are known to have ever adopted the dress or habits of women. The great Jain scholar Hemacandra had a fling at such a cult when he wrote : "what *dharma* is there .....of those who teach *dharma* by vows consisting of imitation of women ?"[51] A sect following such practices must have flourished before the twelfth century. These Chapters of the *Padma Purāṇa*, however, were either non-existent in the sixteenth century or were not approved of by the Gosvāmīs. The first supposition is more likely to be true than the second one, because none of the sixteenth and seventeenth century authorities of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism has ever referred to the 53rd Chapter of the *Padma Purāṇa*, which has got absolutely nothing contrary to their practices or doctrines.

It is necessary to state here that Sanātana Gosvāmin has referred to the return of Kṛṣṇa to Vṛndāvana after killing Dantavakra as described in the 45th Chapter of the *Pātālakhaṇḍa*. He has also quoted the prose passages (45/3-5) in his commentary on the *Bhāgavata*.[52] Many of the Vaiṣṇava authorities have also quoted the verse implying that Kṛṣṇa was pleased to confer the rulership of Vṛndāvana on Rādhā.[53] Chapters 47 to 51 deal with rituals. In half a verse Kṛṣṇa is reported to be saying that he does never go elsewhere leaving Vṛndāvana. The Gosvāmīs would have been glad to quote such a passage, but as a matter of fact they never do so.

Devout followers of Caitanyaism meditate on the *līlās* performed by Kṛṣṇa in all the eight parts of the day.

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51 *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*, III. 86.

52 *Bṛhat Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, X. 78. 16.

53 *Padma Purāṇa, Pātālakhaṇḍa*, 46. 38.

Kavi Karṇapūra in his *Kṛṣṇāhṇikakaumudī*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in his *Govindalīlāmṛta*, and Govindadāsa and Rāi Śekhara in their *Padāvalīs* give a graphic description of the *līlās* pertaining to each of the eight sections of the day. We find an elaborate description of these *līlās* in the 52nd Chapter of the *Pātālakhaṇḍa*. At the early hours of the dawn Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are described as sleeping in close embrace. They are awakened by the chirping of the birds.[54]

The *Sakhīs* of Rādhā now attend on them. They now hasten to their respective homes with considerable anxiety, lest they are detected. Yaśodā finds her son at his bed. He washes his face and goes to the cowshed in the company of Balarāma and friends. Rādhā, too, is awakened in her house by her attendants and performs ablution and other morning duties. Yaśodā sends a messenger to her mother-in-law asking her to send Rādhā for cooking the food for Kṛṣṇa.[55] It is explained here that the sage Durvāsā had given a boon to Rādhā to the effect that the food cooked by her would be tasteful like nectar and persons taking it would get long life. In the meanwhile Kṛṣṇa supervises the milching of cows and returns home. His servants rub the oil on his body, bathe him and dress him up. He then takes his meal in the company of Balarāma and his friends. After the meal he takes betel leaf and rests a while on a beautiful bedstead.

At the next stage we find Kṛṣṇa going out to the forest with cowherd boys and cows. He plays with his friends for a short time and then in the company of two or three intimate friends starts for meeting her beloved Rādhā at the place of tryst. Rādhā too comes there on the pretext of worshipping the Sun or plucking some flowers. The two

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54 *Ibid.*, 52. 20.

55 *Ibid.* 52. 30.

lovers amuse themselves in various ways like swinging, hiding the flute of Kṛṣṇa, or smearing each other's body with sandal paste. When they get tired they drink *madhu* and sleep for a while.[56] Their lady companions too being intoxicated go to sleep. Then Kṛṣṇa enjoys not only Rādhā but on her repeated request her friends as well simultaneously with the same body. The next thing they do is to go to a lake and to have water sports. Having taken their bath they change the clothes and repair to a beautiful house where Vṛndādevī had already kept fruits and sweets ready for them. After partaking of them, Kṛṣṇa takes a short nap. Taking him to be asleep Rādhā and her friends exchange secrets but when they learn that Kṛṣṇa was merely pretending to have been asleep they become much ashamed. Then Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa play dice with kisses and embraces as pawns of the game. Kṛṣṇa next goes to the forest where the cows are grazing in charge of his friends. Rādhā too goes to worship the Sun. Her friends bring Kṛṣṇa in the guise of a priest. Rādhā finds out his identity and they spend a long time in dalliance. Kṛṣṇa then meets his cowherd friends, collects the cows and goes back to his own house. All the inhabitants of Vraja give him a hearty welcome. Kṛṣṇa salutes his parents and pleases his beloved ones with a side-long glance. Kṛṣṇa takes his bath again and after taking some refreshment goes to the cowshed to look after milching. He then enjoys a sumptuous dinner with his father, uncles, cousins and Balarāma.

The court of Nanda then assembles at night and Kṛṣṇa attends it with his father and hears the praise in honour of Kātyāyanī. Yaśodā sends some *prasāda* to Rādhā. She eats it with her friends. She is then dressed up by them in a manner suitable for going out in *abhisāra* to the place of

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56 *Ibid.*, Chs. 52-54.

tryst on the bank of the Yamunā.[57] Kṛṣṇa, too, meets her without being noticed by any body. The pair enjoys music and dance till late hours of night (up to 2½ *praharas*) and then goes to sleep.[58] This description of the daily life of Kṛṣṇa bears such a close resemblance to that given by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava writers, especially Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja that one cannot but suspect that the whole chapter is an interpolation, introduced not earlier than the seventeenth century.

The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* has been quoted rarely by the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. They have never referred to its derivation of the name of Rādhā, the letter *Rā* meaning to give, and *dhā* salvation, i.e., one who gives salvation.[59] The tone of this *Purāṇa* is so grossly erotic that it has never found favour with the orthodox followers of Caitanyaism. It relates how Kṛṣṇa stole the cloths of Rādhā and her 29 female friends with the help of twelve cowherd boys and how all the companions of Rādhā pursued them in a state of nudity with a view to catching and punishing them.[60] It further states that when Kṛṣṇa reappeared before the Gopīs after his disappearance from the place of the *Rāsa* dance, the latter punished him by making him completely naked.[61] The *Rāsa*, according to the *Brahmavaivarta*, took place in the spring season and not in autumn. Singing and dancing play an insignificant part in the *Rāsa* of this *Purāṇa*. *Rāsa* here is almost a synonymn for erotic enjoyment. The number of Gopīs who respond to the call of Kṛṣṇa's flute is nine hundred thousand and Kṛṣṇa assumes as many bodies

57 *Ibid.*, 52. 99.
58 *Ibid.*, 52. 106.
59 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Ch. XVII.
60 *Ibid.*, Ch. 27.
61 *Ibid.*, Ch. 52.

to play with each one of them. But Rādhā is presented in this *Purāṇa* as the chief of the Gopīs and the principal source of delight of Kṛṣṇa.[62]

The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* in its present form is a late work, to which chapters have been added even after the sixteenth century.[63] But some portion of it must have been known to Jayadeva, whose benedictory verse in the *Gītagovinda* can be explained only by referring to the incident related in this *Purāṇa*. One day Nanda was tending the cows in the *Bhāṇḍīra* forest with Kṛṣṇa on his chest. Suddenly dark clouds covered the sky and thunderstorm broke out with heavy rains. At that time Rādhā who was older than Kṛṣṇa appeared there. Nanda told her that he had learnt from Garga that Hari loved her more than even Lakṣmī and that the boy on his lap was greater than Mahāviṣṇu. He, therefore, requested her to take his beloved and fulfil her heart's desire. Rādhā of course, availed of this opportunity.[64] The Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism does not admit that Rādhā was older than Kṛṣṇa or that Nanda was conscious of his divinity or that he would be a consenting party to the love-play of the pair. It is also worth noting that, according to the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, the name of the mother of Rādhā is Kīrtidā, while the *Brahmavaivarta*[65] makes it Kalāvatī, the daughter of King Bhalandana of Kanauj.

The *Bhāgavatamāhātmya*, a section of the *Viṣṇukhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* contains some important and interesting references to Rādhā. It explains that Kṛṣṇa is called *Ātmārāma*, because Rādhā is his very soul and he enjoys

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62 *Ibid.*, IV. 28.

63 Hazra, *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 166.

64 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, IV. 15.

65 *Ibid.*, IV. 18.

her.[66] Again it is asserted that there can be no doubt about the fact that Rādhikā is the *ātmā* of the *Ātmārāma.*[67] In another verse Kṛṣṇa is referred to as the husband of the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu.[68] The *Skanda Purāṇa* cannot be older than the eighth and later than the fourteenth century, though chapters and verses have been added to it from time to time.

The *Varāha Purāṇa* devotes a chapter to the description of places sacred to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. It says that Kṛṣṇa having killed the Asura named Ariṣṭa embraced Rādhā and created a tank in her name nearby. This has become the Rādhākuṇḍa, a dip in which destroys all the sins of a person. The merit acquired by bathing here is superior to that which accrues to a person performing the *Rājasūya* and *Aśvamedha* sacrifices. Haraprasad Sastri, in his introduction to the Asiatic Society edition of the *Purāṇa*, draws attention to the first verse in the last Chapter (Ch. 218) which states that Mādhava Bhatta and Vīreśvara wrote this *Varāha Purāṇa* at Varanasi in 1621 V.S./1564 A.D. He interpreted the word *likhitam* as composing and not copying. How could Lakṣmīdhara quote from the *Varāha Purāṇa* in the twelfth century if it had been composed in the sixteenth century ? Rūpa Gosvāmī is known to have died before 1564 A.D. How was it possible for him then to make so many quotations from the *Varāha Purāṇa* in his *Mathurāmāhātmya* ?

The verse on Rādhākuṇḍa which he has quoted is found in the Asiatic Society's edition (164.34). Rūpa Gosvāmin corroborates it by two quotations, one from the *Mathurā-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the other from the *Kārttikamāhātmya* section of the *Padma Purāṇa.* It is, there-

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66 *Skanda Purāṇa, Bhāgavatamāhātmya*, II. 1. 22.
67 *Ibid.*, II. 2. 11.
68 *Ibid.*, II. 2. 31.

fore, not correct to imagine that Rādhākuṇḍa owes its origin to Caitanya.

The *Devī-Bhāgavata*, which is an *Upapurāṇa* composed in the 11th or 12th century A.D.,[69] makes Kṛṣṇa subordinate to Rādhā. It states that nobody can have the right to worship Kṛṣṇa without first worshipping Rādhā, who is Kṛṣṇaprāṇādhidevī and Rāseśvarī[70] The devotees should meditate on her as an eternally young damsel of twelve years of age, having extremely fair complexion and graceful body. She is seated on a throne, bedecked with jewels. Rādhā's date of birth is here given as Kārttika full-moon-day and the observance of that day is held to be highly meritorious. Nārāyaṇa is described as rendering homage to her with the following hymn, which may be translated thus : "Salutation to thee the supreme goddess, who resides at the *Rāsamaṇḍala*, who lords over the *Rāsa* and is dearer to Kṛṣṇa than his own life. Salutation to the mother of all the three worlds, whose lotus-like feet are worshipped by gods headed by Brahmā and Viṣṇu. Be propitiated, Oh, Ocean of mercy."[71] The trend of the hymn shows that the identification of Rādhā with Durgā indicated by the early *Matsya Purāṇa* continued down to the twelfth century. Śrīdharasvāmī commenting on *Srīmad Bhāgavata*[72] gives a clear hint of the existence of the *Devī-Bhāgavata*, when he says that the *Purāṇa* he is explaining is not to be confused with any other *Purāṇa*. As the *Devī-Bhāgavata* prescribes the method of worshipping goddesses like Maṅgalacaṇḍī and Manasā[73] it is most likely that

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69 R.C. Hazra, *I.H.Q.*, Vol. 27 (1951), pp. 191-196.
70 *Devi-bhāgavata*, IX. 50. 16-18.
71 *Ibid.*, IX. 50. 46-47.
72 *Śrīmadbhāgavata*, I. 1. 1.
73 *Devi-bhāgavata*, IX. 47-48.

it was written in Bengal. It is, therefore, not reasonable to state that the Rādhā cult was introduced in Bengal from Orissa by Caitanya.

There might be some scope for controversy regarding the date of composition of the *Purāṇas* and *Upapurāṇas*. But the references to Rādhā in the writings of poets and scholars like Ānandavardhana and Kṣemendra, whose dates are well-known, prove beyond doubt the place which Rādhā held in the affection of Kṛṣṇa. Ānandavardhana, who flourished in the last quarter of the ninth century, quotes a verse (saying *Yathā ca*) in his *Dhvanyāloka*[74] in which Rādhā, being entreated by Kṛṣṇa many times says with biting satire that there is no doubt that it is extremely difficult to please Rādhā. She points out that the piece of cloth with which Kṛṣṇa was wiping out her tears belonged to the lady with whom he had spent the previous night. It is a verse of benediction invoking Kṛṣṇa as God in association with Rādhā. It cannot be argued that Kṛṣṇa is indeed the divinity here but his beloved Rādhā is merely a literary figure. Kṣemendra's *Daśāvatāracarita* is a work apparently on a religious theme. In it he says that though Kṛṣṇa was attached to many damsels of the cowherd class yet Rādhā was dearest to him just as the bee loves most the *Jātī* flower.

Numerous poems quoted by Śrīdharadāsa in his *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, an anthology of poems compiled in 1205 A.D., prove beyond any shadow of doubt that Jayadeva was not the solitary poet singing the glory of the love of Rādhā. Umāpatidhara says in a poem that Kṛṣṇa while sleeping with Rukmiṇī muttered unconsciously in his dream, " 'O Rādhā, who told you that I embraced your *Sakhī* in the water? It is a lie and you are needlessly grieving for it'. On hearing these words Rukmiṇī loosened

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74 *Dhvanyāloka*, III. 49.

her embrace. May such Śrāṅgin protect you."[75] Umāpati in another verse directly hails those glances of Rādhā which signified humility and pride at being able to monopolise the attention of Kṛṣṇa though the other Gopīs were trying their best to distract him.[76] Śaraṇa, a contemporary of Jayadeva, describes how Dāmodara, the lord of Dvārakā, grieved when he remembered Rādhā coming to meet him in her first tryst. "Let Him be the cause of joy of the three worlds."[77] Govardhanācārya says in a poem that Rādhā sang about the beauty and qualities of Kṛṣṇa vocally and instrumentally through flute and lyre and taught it to her parrot in the cage.[78] Another poem by an unknown poet depicting the piteous condition of Rādhā in separation has been quoted not only in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*,[79] but also in the much earlier *Dhvanyāloka*. All these evidences cannot be brushed aside as mere examples of literary composition. It was because of her unparalleled love and sufferings that Rādhā became dearest to Kṛṣṇa and these have made her the ideal of love and devotion. She can not be judged by an ordinary ethical standard. She is neither moral, nor immoral but amoral.

We may now enquire whether Kṛṣṇa ever met Rādhā after his departure for Mathurā at a comparatively young age. The *Bhāgavata* does not specify any name indeed; but it describes the meeting of the Gopas and Gopīs with Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra on the occasion of a solar eclipse.[80]

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75 *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, I. 53. 5.

76 *Ibid.*, I. 55. 3.

77 *Ibid.*, I. 61. 2.

78 *Āryāsaptaśatī*, 211.

79 *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, I. 58. 4.

80 *Bhāgavata*, X. 82-84.

Though the meeting place was at Kurukṣetra the event must have taken place before the Bhārata battle, because we find that Bhīṣma and Droṇa were also present on the occasion. Sanātana Gosvāmī explains that the meeting took place after the *Rājasūya* ceremony and the killing of Sālva.[81] But Jīva Gosvāmin holds that it must have happened before the *Rājasūya*, because Draupadī is described to have enquired of each of the eight principal queens of Kṛṣṇa as to how she was married. His argument is that had the solar eclipse taken place after the *Rājasūya*, Draupadī would have satisfied her curiosity when she met the wives of Kṛṣṇa at Indraprastha.[82]

Sanātana Gosvamī holds that Kṛṣṇa must have come back to Vṛndāvana once to fulfil the promise of returning as stated in at least three places[83] in the *Bhāgavata*. He then proves by quoting some verses and prose passages from the *Uttarakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* that Kṛṣṇa did come back to Vraja after killing Dantavakra and stayed there for two months happily with the Gopas and Gopīs. These passages are found in the extant *Padma Purāṇa*.[84] But the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of this *Purāṇa*[85] says that Kṛṣṇa lived in Vraja for three nights only after killing Dantavakra. From a perusal of the *Uttarakhaṇḍa*[86] we learn that it was written after the *Pātālakhaṇḍa*. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa's* description that Kṛṣṇa having spent one hundred years at Mathurā and Dvārakā came back to Vṛndāvana and stayed there for fourteen years is more comforting to the devotees.

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81 *Bṛhat-Vaiṣṇavatoṣaṇī*, X. 82. 1.
82 *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, Sec. 174.
83 *Bhāgavata*, X. 39. 33 ; 45. 17 ; 46. 25-26.
84 *Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, Ch. 252, 25-29.
85 *Ibid.*, *Pātālakhaṇḍa*, Ch. 45. 4.
86 *Ibid.*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa*, I. 3.

According to this *Purāṇa*, Rādhā remained all along a girl of twelve and Kṛṣṇa retained his youthful look.[87] It is strange that neither Sanātana nor Jīva Gosvāmin referred to, much less quoted from the concluding portion of the *Harivaṁśa*, which describes the return of Kṛṣṇa to Vraja. Is their silence due to the fact that the name of Rādhā or any other Gopī is not mentioned there? But the *Padma Purāṇa* passage quoted by them also does not refer to Rādhā.

87 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, IV. 54.

APPENDIX III

RĀDHĀ AND KṚṢṆA IN MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE

Glorification of Rādhā is the dominant note of the mediaeval Indian literature. The lyrical poems composed in Sanskrit, Bengali, Gujarati and Hindi portray the love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa in all its vicissitudes. The poets are more interested in analysing the psychological modes of Rādhā than in depicting the character of Kṛṣṇa. The earliest poet to assign rather a subordinate role to the hero is Jayadeva, the famous author of the exquisitely beautiful poem, the *Gītagovinda*. This poet has been aptly described as one in whom Sanskrit love-poetry, both in its technical and emotional aspects, reaches its climax.[1] But Jayadeva did not confine his poetic efforts to the composition of love-poems alone. The *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* has quoted as many as 30 of his poems, of which only three are to be found in the *Gītagovinda*. Of the other 27, more than half the verses are heroic couplets, praising valour, sword, war and conquest.[2] Fantastic theories have been built up on utterly unreliable legends to show that the poet used to play on musical instruments, while his wife Padmāvatī sang songs and performed dances as professional entertainers. Inspiring poems on the heroic sentiment could not have been composed by such a person. It is doubtful whether Jayadeva was an orthodox Vaiṣṇava. One of his poems (*Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, 19) seeks the benediction of Śiva. It is not unlikely that like the

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1 S.K. De, *Ancient Indian Erotics and Erotic Literature*, p. 54.

2 *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* (ed. S.C. Banerjee), Verse Nos. 1465, 1470, 1484, 1515, 1538, 1539, 1540, 1558, 1564, 1570, 1630 and 2087. Verse 248 praises Kalki for killing the Mlecchas.

Maithil poet Vidyāpati he was really a worshipper of Śiva and at the same time took delight in depicting the amours of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as an erotic mystic. It is notewrothy that Śrīdharadāsa invokes the blessings of Gaurī, Gaṅgā, Lakṣmī, Durgā, Kālī and Sarasvatī in the first section of his anthology but does not devote any sub-section to Rādhā or Sītā. Rādhā, of course, is referred to as the best beloved of Kṛṣṇa in numerous poems in the *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*.

The *Gītagovinda*, does not attempt to narrate, as has been supposed by some scholars, all the phases of love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from its first awakening to its final fruition. In the very first canto we find Rādhā, afflicted with the pang of separation from Kṛṣṇa, making a frantic search for her beloved in the forests during a night in the spring season. She discovered Kṛṣṇa sporting with a multitude of Gopīs. Though Kṛṣṇa praised the beauty of her face and embraced her in the presence of other Gopīs, Rādhā thought that her superiority over them was in jeopardy and, therefore, she left the place and hid herself in a bower. She felt extremely unhappy as she could not be angry with Kṛṣṇa, despite his unjust conduct towards her. She fervently requested her lady-friend to devise some ways by which she could be united with her beloved. In the third canto Jayadeva recounts how Kṛṣṇa too became penitent and having made a fruitless search for her began to bemoan her absence at a bower on the bank of the river Yamunā. He became mad with love and imagined that Rādhā was moving in front of him. He begged her forgiveness and promised never to behave like that, though she was actually not present before him. In the fourth canto Kṛṣṇa is informed of the love-lorn condition of Rādhā by one of her friends. Rādhā thinks that she would die of the pang of separation and, therefore, repeats the name of Hari incessantly so that she might meet him in her next birth.

In the fifth canto Kṛṣṇa requested the friend of Rādhā to comfort her with his words and to bring her to him. She told Rādhā that Kṛṣṇa too, was pining for her and was eagerly waiting in the place of tryst to meet her. She urged her to proceed immediately to go to her lover. The sixth canto narrates the mobility of Rādhā to go to Kṛṣṇa because of her weakness on account of the pang of separation. Her friend tells Kṛṣṇa that constantly thinking of him alone she considers herself as Kṛṣṇa. She is fervently expecting to meet him in her own bower. The seventh canto describes the bemoanings of Rādhā at the failure of Kṛṣṇa to come to her. She apprehends that Kṛṣṇa has probably gone to some other woman, or that he has been prevented by his friends or that he has missed his way in the darkness. She imagines that Hari must be sporting with some passionate lady. She, therefore, prays that her life may be taken away by the five arrows of Cupid or that her body may be drowned in the cool waters of the Yamunā. The night thus passed away in vain. The eighth canto relates how at the dawn Kṛṣṇa appeared before Rādhā and falls at her feet entreating her. But Rādhā repulses him. She accuses him with faithlessness and bids him to go to the lady with whom he has passed the night. When Kṛṣṇa goes away she feels repentent. Her friend asks her in the ninth canto to receive Kṛṣṇa with grace and thereby to be relieved of her sorrows. The tenth canto describes the entreaties of Kṛṣṇa to Rādhā in the next evening. Kṛṣṇa tells Rādhā that she is his ornament, and she is his very life. He assures her that no other woman has got any place in his heart. He goes so far as to suggest that Rādhā should place her feet on his head and thus alleviate the pain he is suffering from. The eleventh canto describes the reconcilation of the two and the twelvth gives an intimate description of the love sports of the divine couple.

Thus the poem deals with certain phases of love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa during a period of about twenty-four hours. The plain meaning of the introductory verse is that Nanda asks Rādhā to take Kṛṣṇa to home as the night is dark and the sky is cloudy. If this be the real sense Rādhā must be older than Kṛṣṇa. But Rāṇā Kumbha in his commentary on the poem states that if the verse is interpreted literally the hero would be a mere child, incapable of taking any action himself ; the heroine would have the attributes of a nurse and Nanda, the father, would virtually play the role of the go-between. He suggests that the word *Nanda-nideśataḥ* means from the house of Nanda[3] and the whole verse purports that Kṛṣṇa asks Rādhā to take him to his house and be his wife. But Śaṅkara Miśra and Nārāyaṇa Kavirāja, two other famous commentators, say that Nanda here is no other than the father of Kṛṣṇa and that he holds Rādhā responsible for bringing her to the forest on the cloudy night and therefore she must take him back. They seem to rely on the episode narrated in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* (*Srī Kṛṣṇa Janmakhaṇḍa*, Ch. XV).

Jayadeva does not follow the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* slavishly. While the *Bhāgavata* describes the autumnal *Rāsa*, the *Gītagovinda* speaks of the *Rāsa* in the spring season. In the *Bhāgavata* Kṛṣṇa's relation with his parents, friends and the Gopīs is depicted. But Jayadeva's hero and heroine have no concern with any body in the world and have got not duty or work to perform. The poet does not refer anywhere to the husband, sister-in-law or mother-in-law of Rādhā. The only reference to the outside world is to be found in the statement that the lady who has got the good fortune of enjoying the company of Kṛṣṇa does not

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3 According to some commentator, Nanda means the flute of Kṛṣṇa. Pūjāri-Goswāmi explains the word as the happy message of the Sakhi.

have to sigh at the ridicule hurled by her relatives.[4] The poet incidentally refers to the holding of the Govardhana hill by Kṛṣṇa[5] and to the killing of Kaṁsa's elephant named Kuvalayāpīḍa.[6] But the poem is essentially concerned with love and love alone.

If Rādhā of Jayadeva is totally oblivious of her relation to the outside world, Caṇḍīdāsa's Rādhā is over-conscious of the adverse criticism of her relatives and co-villagers. Caṇḍīdāsa depicts Rādhā as one tormented by the persecution of her husband's sister and mother. They put all sorts of obstacles to her love affair with Kṛṣṇa. In the background of their hostility her love for Kṛṣṇa shines all the more beautifully. She tries to forget Kṛṣṇa but the effort merely redoubles her love for him. She confesses to her friend (*Sakhī*) that she would prefer to bear all the calumny and ostracism rather than give up her sweet but secret relation to Kṛṣṇa.[7] While Jayadeva's Rādhā goes out to the bower of Kṛṣṇa to meet him, Caṇḍīdāsa's Kṛṣṇa comes to meet Rādhā in the house of her husband. It is a rainy night and he is patiently waiting for her at the place of assignment. But Rādhā is prevented from going out. She feels as if her heart will break as she ponders over the sad plight of her lover. But at the same time she is overjoyed at the idea that her beloved is prepared to suffer so much for her sake. The skill displayed by Caṇḍīdāsa in describing the oscilation of Rādhā between joy and sorrow has elicited unstinted admiration of Rabindranath.[8]

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4 *Gitagovinda*, VII. 36.

5 *Ibid.*, IV. 23.

6 *Ibid.*, X. 16.

7 Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Caṇḍidāser Padāvali* (ed. Sāhitya Pariṣat), No. 26.

8 Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Rabindra Sāhitye Padāvalir Sthāna*, pp. 30-31.

Caṇḍīdāsa's Rādhā is proud of her love for Kṛṣṇa. She does not care to consider whether her conduct is moral or immoral. She makes a complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa and boldly tells him: "Dearest! Thou art my life. To thee have I surrendered my body and mind, my life and my honour. Immersing my limbs and my thoughts in thy love have I consecrated them at thy feet. Thou are my lord. Thou are my destiny. Nothing else appeals to me. People call me fallen, I do not grieve at it. To put on for thee the necklace of bad name is my greatest happiness. Loyal or disloyal, thou knowest all. I know not good or evil. At thy feet, says Caṇḍīdāsa, sin and virtue are both the same think."[9] Rādhā's unparalleled love occasionally puts Kṛṣṇa to an embarassing position. One morning he comes to her with the marks of the teeth and nails of the lady with whom he spent the night. Rādhā does not rebuke him and shows sympathy for his pitiable condition. She offers to obliterate the marks by tender nursing.[10] Words are more effective than bitter sarcasm in putting Kṛṣṇa to shame.

A number of poems is attributed to Caṇḍīdāsa describing the various guises adopted by Kṛṣṇa to find a way of meeting Rādhā without being recognised by any body. He disguises himself as a magician, a peddler woman, a female barber, a nun, a garlandmaker and a physician to hoodwink the inmates of the family of Rādhā's husband. The disguise is so perfect that even Rādhā fails to recognise him till he approaches her in an intimate way.[11] Caṇḍīdāsa takes delight in depicting the grief of Kṛṣṇa at his separation from Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa tells the

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9 Adapted from the translation by Bipin Chandra Pal, *Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 77.

10 Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Caṇḍidāser Padāvali*, No. 68.

11 *Padakalpataru*, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 643, 644.

grandmother of Rādhā that the pang of separation is afflicting him so much that he apprehends the approach of death. He asks her to burn his dead body in the same *ghāṭa* of the Yamunā which is resorted to by Rādhā in the morning and afternoon for drawing water. He expresses a desire to hear the name of Rādhā on the eve of his death so that he may be united with her in future births.[12] Caṇḍīdāsa cannot bear the idea that Kṛṣṇa has gone to Mathurā for good. He describes in a poem the great joy which the people of Vṛndāvana felt at the return of Kṛṣṇa from Mathurā. Nanda Yaśodā and Rādhā got back their life as it were and entreated him not to leave them again.[13]

Vidyāpati, the court-poet of Śivasiṁha and his successors on the throne of Mithilā, in the early fifteenth century, depicts Rādhā as a lady belonging to a highly aristocratic family. She sometimes ridicules Kṛṣṇa as a simple rustic, who knows only how to tend the cows, but is an utter stranger to the refind ways of making love.[14] When Kṛṣṇa asks for some special favours from her, she retorts that he is accustomed to make love to the cowherd women, and not to the ladies of genteel birth. But in some other poems, Vidyāpati refers to Kṛṣṇa as the husband of sixteen thousand Gopīs.[15] The predominant note, however, of Vidyāpati's love poems is the relationship of illicit love between the hero and the heroine. Unlike the Rādhā of Caṇḍīdāsa, Vidyāpati's Rādhā is extremely cautious in maintaining her reputation unsallied. One day Kṛṣṇa caught hold of the hem of her *sārī* in the midst of a byepath and Rādhā pleaded for the release on the grounds

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12 B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, Nos. 647, 386.
13 *Padāmṛtasamudra* and *Padakalpataru*, 1993.
14 K.N. Mitra and B. B. Majumdar, *Vidyāpati*, Poem Nos. 56, 81, 117.
15 *Ibid.*, No. 55.

that it might be torn and that if she was uncovered, infamy would spread over the world.[16]

Three of the poems of Vidyāpati refer to Kṛṣṇa as a ferryman taking Rādhā across the Yamunā and demanding the enjoyment of her body as the fare.[17] No poem of this poet on Kṛṣṇa as levying the octroi duty on the Gopīs has as yet been discovered. This incident is known as the *Dānalīlā* in Sanskrit, Gujarati, Hindi and Bengali literature. The *Naukā-vilāsa* or the dalliance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the boat was also a favourite theme with the mediaeval Indian poets. The earliest reference to this *Līlā* is to be found in a work of prosody, named *Prākṛta Paiṅgala*, composed most probably in the fourteenth century.[18] In a poem contained in this work Rādhā asks Kṛṣṇa to ply the boat and says, "the boat is small, do not shake it. Cross the river first and then you may take what you desire."[19]

The *Dānalīlā* and the *Naukā-vilāsa* themes have been elaborated by Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa in a nameless manuscript, which has been designated by its modern editor, Basanta Ranjan Roy, as the *Kṛṣṇa-Kīrtana*. Only one manuscript of the work, without the beginning and without the end, was discovered in 1909 in a village near Bishnupur in the District of Bankura. No other manuscript of this work has as yet been discovered, though a few of its stray songs have been found in a comparatively recent manuscript, belonging to the University of Calcutta.[20] There are

16 *Ibid.*, No. 342.

17 *Ibid.*, Nos. 49, 344, 351.

18 Certain poems contained in it refer to Hamir and the battle of Ranthambhor, which was fought in 1302 A.D. The book is supposed to have been compiled within a short period after the battle.

19 *Prākṛita Paiṅgalam*, No. 6.

20 Calcutta University Bengali Mss., No. 5093.

specimens of the handwriting of three different persons in the main manuscript. R.D. Banerji took into consideration only the old style of writing which according to him was the earliest, and came to the conclusion that the manuscript was copied in the fourteenth century. The proper criterion for determining the age of the copy should have been not the archaic but the late style of the script which at places is visible in the same folio. He did not properly examine the type of paper and ink used. Dr. Sukumar Sen observes that the later style of the script as well as the paper and the ink used points to a date which may be as late as the middle of the eighteenth century.[21] The language of the book, according to him, cannot be later than 1600 A.D., but it can not be said that such language was never used after the fifteenth century, as is supposed by some authorities on the development of the Bengali language. He has made a more definite statement in his *History of Bengali Literature* where he writes "on the whole it may be agreed that the language of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* roughly dates in the sixteenth century."

Many Persian words like *Mujuriā* and *Kutghāṭ* occur in the book. It was written in the Hindu principality of Bishnupur, which did not come under the influence of the Turko-Afghan rulers before the sixteenth century. One indirect internal evidence also indicates that it was written early in the sixteenth century in the life time of Caitanya. Rādhā asks Baḍāi to make a thorough search for Kṛṣṇa at all the places in the Vraja and even at the habitat of the sage, Nārada. If she fails to trace her in any of these places she should look for him on the bank of the river Bhāgīrathī. If he is not available there too, she should go to the place of

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21 Sukumar Sen, *Bāṅglā Sāhityer Itihāsa*, Part I, Vol. I (third ed.), p. 129 ; *History of Bengali Literature*, p. 71.

Sāgara, which means both the sea and a cowherd by that name. If he can not be found there too, he must be found at the place where Jagannātha resides.[22] Kṛṣṇa in his early life at Vṛndāvana had no connection with any place on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī. But Caitanya, who was identified with Kṛṣṇa spent the first twenty-four years of his life at Nabadwip, which is situated on the bank of the Ganges. He resided at Purī in his later life. The references to the sea and Jagannātha, the presiding deity of Purī, clearly hint at an allusion to the identification of Caitanya with Kṛṣṇa.

But the poet was far from being a devout Vaiṣṇava. It was not unusual for the devotees of Caṇḍī to pay homage to Caitanya. Mukundarām Cakravartī in his *Caṇḍīmaṅgala Kāvya* makes obeisance to Caitanya along with the other gods and goddesses. The proper name of the author of the so-called *Kṛṣṇa-Kīrtana* is Ananta. He uses it as many as seven times along with the surname Caṇḍīdāsa, as servant of Caṇḍī.[23] The poet usually refers to himself as a servitor of Vāsulī. This goddess according to Haraprasad Sastri, is meditated upon as one with a grim face having a garland of human skulls on her neck, holding a sword in hand and drinking human blood. It is not unlikely that Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa, being moved by sectarian narrowness, deliberately blackened the character of Kṛṣṇa. Nowhere else in the whole range of Indian literature has Kṛṣṇa been vilified so much as in his poem.

Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa relies more on his imagination

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22 *Kṛṣṇa-Kirtana* (1st ed.), pp. 339-40. See Bimanbehari Majumdar's article in the Bengali *Viśva-bhāratī*, Vol. XII, pp. 32-35.

23 *Kṛṣṇa-Kirtana*, pp. 56, 61, 62, 213, 324, 337 and 341. In p. 213 he distinctly states that his name is Ananta and that he is a servant of Caṇḍī.

than on the accounts of the *Purāṇas* in relating the incidents connected with the adoloscent life of Kṛṣṇa. According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Rādhā was married to Rāyān, the brother of Yaśodā, at the age of twelve and Kṛṣṇa was brought to Gokula fourteen years after her marriage.[24] This account thus makes Rādhā senior to Kṛṣṇa by twenty-six years. Ananta Baḍu speaks of Rādhā as a girl of eleven,[25] twelve[26] or thirteen when she is courted by Kṛṣṇa. The poet is not very consistent in his description of the age of Rādhā. At two places she says that she has been going to Mathurā to sell curd for the last twelve years.[27] Probably he did not mean it. One gets an impression from his book that Kṛṣṇa was a precocious lad of fourteen or so and Rādhā was younger than him by two or three years. On hearing of the budding breast of Rādhā from Baḍāi, who is an aunt of Rādhā's mother, Kṛṣṇa commissions the old woman to play the part of a procuress. When Rādhā hears of the immoral proposal she slaps Baḍāi, who complains to Kṛṣṇa about the insult meted out to her. Kṛṣṇa then divulges to her his diabolical plan of avenging the wrong done to her. He tells her that he will sit below the *Kadamba* tree on the bank of the Yamunā as a toll-officer and take away all her merchandise in milk and milk-products, eat up the sour milk and take away her precious necklace. He will then ravish her at Vṛndāvana. He will aim at her erotic shafts which will make Rādhā fall in passionate love but he will afterwards behave like an ascetic and refuse to have any truck with her.[28] The whole poem is nothing but an

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24 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Prakṛtikhaṇḍa, Ch. 49.

25 *Kṛṣṇa-Kirtana*, Dānakhaṇḍa, pp. 35, 45, 58.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 70—'I am running the twelfth year and have not reached the thirteenth as yet'.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 126.

28 *Kṛṣṇa-Kirtana*, p. 28.

elaborate description of the execution of his plan. Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa's Kṛṣṇa makes a show of making love to Rādhā, but his real intention is to make her condition pitiable. The wicked youth succeeds in his evil design with the connivance of the old procuress. He robs the young girl of all her ornaments. He tells Rādhā again and again that he is the lord of all the three worlds and the object of his incarnation is to enjoy casual pleasures with Rādhā.[29] He is fully aware of the fact that he is really the son of Devakī and Vasudeva and tells Rādhā that his connection with her would not mean incest. Rādhā, however, had no intention of falling in his trap again. She refused to go out selling milk to Mathurā. But the Baḍāi persuaded her to go by another route, where, however, Kṛṣṇa was plying the boat with a view to meeting Rādhā. She had to take the boat. To her dismay she discovered in the mid stream that it was leaking. Kṛṣṇa advised her to throw off all her milk and even her apparels so that the burden on the boat might become light. He also asked her to give him a kiss so that he might get back the strength to ply the boat. Rādhā out of fear for her life, had to comply with all these. Kṛṣṇa drowned the boat and enjoyed Rādhā in the water. This time Rādhā reciprocated. She begged Kṛṣṇa to return to her the ornaments he had forcibly taken away from her and Kṛṣṇa acceded to her request. Rādhā being conscious now of her hold on Kṛṣṇa one day made him carry her goods on his shoulders. Her friends laughed at him and he became ashamed of the mean work he was performing. He split the milk he was carrying and Rādhā rebuked him for his negligence. On another occasion she made him hold the umbrella over her head. This was also considered a work beneath his dignity.

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29 *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 103, 127, 185, 191.

He, however, agreed to do it on condition of getting physical enjoyment.

Rādhā induced Kṛṣṇa to enjoy the charms of all the sixteen thousand of her friends so that they might not speak evil of her. She was no longer a simple rustic girl. She developed into a consummate diplomat. One day Kṛṣṇa hid himself in the water while making love to the Gopīs. As he did not come out of the water for a long time Rādhā and her Baḍāi thought that on being exhausted by repeated intercourse he had been drowned. Rādhā considered it prudent to hurry back home lest she should be held responsible for his death. Baḍāi proposed that next day early in the morning they should come back to search for the corpse of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā agreed.[30] And yet some scholars have hailed this work as a great love poem. Leaving the lover to his fate in the river the young girl sought her own safety at home. Nothing can be a greater travesty of love. Next morning all the Gopīs came to the Yamunā and leaving all their clothes and ornaments on the bank entered the water to make a thorough search for the body of Kṛṣṇa. Meanwhile Kṛṣṇa stole away all the clothes as well as the ornaments and climbed the *Kadamba* tree. The Gopīs were glad to see him alive. They entreated him to return their clothes and ornaments. He complied with their request but did not return Rādhā's neclace. Rādhā complained to Yaśodā. Now Kṛṣṇa brought a counter charge against her. He pleaded innocence and said that the sixteen hundred Gopīs including Rādhā tried to rape him and that Rādhā committed adultery with some other person too. As he wanted to inform others about her conduct Rādhā had accused him of theft. Kṛṣṇa now

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30 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

resolved to make Rādhā the bŭtt of ridicule for all. He shot the five erotic arrows at her and Rādhā apparently lost her life. Baḍāi accused him of the murder and tied him down. Kṛṣṇa then made her alive and both of them indulged in sensual pleasure. Rādhā was then charmed by Kṛṣṇa with the sound of his flute. But Kṛṣṇa, according to his previous resolution, turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties. Baḍāi succeeded in bringing him once to Rādhā but when she had fallen asleep after the enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa left her for good. While at Mathurā he became supremely indifferent to Rādhā. The literal meaning of the appellation *Kṛṣṇa-Kīrtana* is eulogy of Kṛṣṇa, but the book is actually the grossest calumny on Kṛṣṇa. He has been depicted throughout the book as a gross sensualist, spiteful in nature and boastful of his prowess. It is strange that some scholars at one time believed that Caitanya enjoyed the poems of this Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa. What he did enjoy were the celestial songs of the great poet Caṇḍīdāsa (without any affix) who flourished a few decades before his advent. Sanātana Goswāmin's reference to *Dāna Khaṇḍa* and *Naukā-khaṇḍa* by poets like Caṇḍīdāsa[31] probably alludes to Sanskrit works written by Śrī Caṇḍīdāsa, who has been mentioned by Viśvanāth Kavirāja in his *Sāhityadarṭaṇa* (Ch. IV).

The Bengali lyrics took a new turn after the advent of Caitanya. His unparalleled love for Kṛṣṇa supplied to the poets a model for delineating the character of Rādhā. The earnest yearnings of Caitanya for God were attributed to Rādhā. While the Rādhā of Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati were afraid of scandal-mongering by her friends and relatives, the Rādhā of the poets who flourished after the

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31 Sanātana Goswāmin's commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, X. 33. 26.

initiation of Caitanya into mystic life, scorns all those who dared to speak evil of her love for Kṛṣṇa. Murārī Gupta, a close associate of Caitanya, describes in one of the few Bengali poems composed by him how Rādhā exclaimed: "I have set myself adrift in a stream (of love), vast and swift-flowing. What can the dogs on the banks (*kula*, which means the family of the husband and of the father, as well as the bank of the river) do to me ?"[32]

Jñānadāsa's Rādhā too feels proud of the fact that scandal-mongers associate her name with that of Kṛṣṇa. She compares the love of Kṛṣṇa with the rays of the moon which dispel the darkness of calumny spread by evil people.[33] Her love for Kṛṣṇa grows more intense as she is persecuted by her superiors more severely.[34] Jñānadāsa's Kṛṣṇa loves Rādhā so dearly that he can not bear the idea that she should tread on hard ground ; he, therefore, plucks flowers and spreads them on the road through which Rādhā would pass. In relating the *Dānalīlā*, Jñānadāsa displays a keen sense of humour and also deep psychological insight. His Kṛṣṇa poses himself as a dutiful government official, bent upon collecting the toll from all, irrespective of their relationship to him. He insists on making a thorough search of her person to prevent any smuggling of valuable jewel.[35] Rādhā understands his motive and retorts that Kṛṣṇa considers himself clever and beautiful but in reality he is neither the one nor the other. Had he been beautiful he would have created a havoc among ladies.[36] Jñānadāsa's Rādhā typifies simultaneously the complex sentiments of

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32 *Padakalpataru*, 751.

33 Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Jñānadāsa O Tāñhār Padāvalī*, p. 307.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 298.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 325.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 322.

joy, pride, desire, jealousy, fear and wrath at the *Dānalīlā* incident. Jñānadāsa brings out a sharp contrast between the pastoral life of Kṛṣṇa and his magnificance as a king at Mathurā. A female messenger of Rādhā satirically remarks that at Vṛndāvana he had to tend the cows, live in a hut and make love with the ugly cowherd women; whereas at Mathurā he enjoys royal luxury and the company of witty and beautiful ladies.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century Govindadāsa wrote highly artistic poems on the love of Kṛṣṇa for Rādhā. His Kṛṣṇa tells his intimate friend Subala that ever since he has cast his eyes on Rādhā on the day of overpowering the serpent Kālīya he has lost his sleep. He spends all his days in constant meditation of her.[37] On seeing the *Campaka* flower he falls in a trance, because its colour resembles the complexion of Rādhā. He makes an image of Rādhā with the golden-huen jasmine flower and embraces it, but the heat generated by the pang of separation from Rādhā is so intense that the flowers are turned into ashes. He pours down jars of water on the sandy lane in the summer noon so that Rādhā may not find any difficulty in walking over it.[38] The Bengali Vaiṣṇava poets of the post-Caitanya age have almost transformed Kṛṣṇa from a lover of thousands of Gopīs to a steadfast lover of Rādhā. His occasional lapses are sometimes hinted at simply as a means of heightening the intensity of love for each other.

Caitanya writes in one of the eight verses he composed : "Kṛṣṇa may be a libertine, and he may embrace or tread upon me or give me mortal pain by becoming invisible from my sight, but in whatever way he may behave according to

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37 Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Govindadāser Padāvali O Tāñhār Yuga*, No. 222.

38 *Ibid.*, 226.

his own whim, he and none else is the darling of my heart." It is needless to say that here Caitanya identifies himself completely with Rādhā. He does not recognise Kṛṣṇa as the son of Vasudeva. He addresses him as the *Nanda-tanuja*, born out of the body of Nanda. He inspired his followers, and especially Sanātana, Rūpa and Raghunātha Dāsa to eschew the perception of God's Majesty (*Aiśvarya*) and concentrate on his love and sweetness (*Mādhurya*). This is why we do not find any Bengali poem on the miraculous deeds of Kṛṣṇa like the holding of the mount Govardhana or the killing of the demons. The songs written by the poets belonging to the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism sing only of his unalloyed sweetness as appreciated by his friends, parents and the Gopīs.

Sanātana Gosvāmin in his *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛta* states that the Yādavas are more fortunate than the Pāṇḍavas, because they get full opportunity for living close to Kṛṣṇa. But Uddhava says that the Gopas and the Gopīs of Vṛndāvana are much more dear to Kṛṣṇa than the Yādavas of Dvārakā. His description of the life of Kṛṣṇa at the house of Nanda in Goloka (the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa) leads one to the conclusion that Rādhā is the wife of Kṛṣṇa. She serves some sweets to Kṛṣṇa at dinner and Kṛṣṇa playfully indicates that it is distasteful to him. This was done simply with a view to annoying Rādhā. Some time after the dinner Kṛṣṇa goes to bed and Rādhā puts betel leaves in his mouth while Candrāvalī and Lalitā gracefully shampooes his feet. Other ladies perform vocal and instrumental music.[39] Sanātana narrates one curious episode in connection with the suppression of the serpent Kālīya. Kṛṣṇa puts his upper garment into the nose of Kālīya and uses it as the rein to drive the serpent like a horse.

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39 *Bṛhat Bhāgavatāmṛta*, II. 6. 130-144.

The flute serves the purpose of the whip.[40] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* states that the Gopīs follow with wailings the chariot in which Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are being carried to Mathurā ; Sanātana adds that Kṛṣṇa comes down from the chariot without being noticed by anybody and goes to a bower along with the Gopīs. Akrura detects the absence of Kṛṣṇa and with the help of Balarāma hurries to the gate of the bower. He entreats the Gopīs to allow Kṛṣṇa to go to Mathurā and rescue his parents from the oppressions of Kaṁsa. The Gopīs promptly answer that Akrūra is a spy of Kaṁsa and a damned liar, because Devakī and Vasudeva are not the parents of Kṛṣṇa.[41] After a little while Kṛṣṇa leaves the Gopīs and proceeds to Mathurā. Sanātana, however, explains that Kṛṣṇa does not stay at Mathurā for a long time after killing Kaṁsa. He goes back to Vraja again, returns to Mathurā and again kills Kaṁsa. This happens again and again in Goloka.[42] The *līlās* of Kṛṣṇa do not take place only once like historical events ; they are going on eternally.

Sanātana's younger brother, Rūpa Gosvāmin shows wonderful ingenuity and boldness in describing the life of Kṛṣṇa and his associates, friends and relatives. The *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, written by Rūpa in 1550 A.D., states that all who reside in Vraja may be said to belong to Kṛṣṇa's *parivāra* which word literally means the family. These are classified under three groups—the Brāhmaṇas, the artisans and those who earn their livelihood by tending the cattle. The latter are sub-divided into three classes—the Vaiśyas, the Ābhīras and the Gujārs, who are all known as Gopa and Vallabha and are descended from the family of

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40 *Ibid.*, II. 6. 246-48.
41 *Ibid.*, II. 6. 277-287.
42 *Ibid.*, II. 6. 352-355.

Yādava.[43] The Ābhīras are said to be Śūdras and they bear the surname, Ghoṣa. The Gujārs or Gurjaras tend goats, occupy a lower status than the Ābhīras and live at the extremity of the place of tending the cattle. The colour of the body of Kṛṣṇa seems to have puzzled Rūpa Gosvāmin as much as it has done to some modern scholars. He tries to solve the problem by stating that Kṛṣṇa's paternal grand-father Parjanya was white in colour, his grand-mother was golden in hue, his father Nanda was reddish but his mother Yaśodā was *śyāmalā* or black in colour. Sumukha, the father of Yaśodā is described by Rūpa as having the colour of black berry. Rūpa Gosvāmin does not refer to Devakī and Vasudeva as the parents of Kṛṣṇa in this book. Parjanya had two brothers, Urjanya and Rājanya, and one sister Suverjanā, who was an expert dancer. Nanda had two elder brothers, Upananda and Abhinanda, two younger brothers, Sannanda and Nandana, and two sisters, Sānandā and Nandinī. Kṛṣṇa's maternal grandmother was Pātalā, whose brother was Gola. The latter's wife was Jaṭilā, who is described to have been as black as a crow. This Jaṭilā, was the mother-in-law of Rādhā. Rūpa Gosvāmin does not refer to the name of Kuṭilā. But his contemporary Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmin mentions Kuṭilā in his *Dānakeli-cintāmaṇi* (Verse 119).

The appendix to the work is probably the handiwork of some other writer. It gives an elaborate account of the friends of Kṛṣṇa and various categories of persons attending on him. The name of his barbers, washermen, scavengers, betel-suppliers, tailors, butlers, goldsmiths, garland-makers, maid-servants, messengers etc. are also

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43 Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Rādhākṛṣṇagaṇōddeśadipikā*, Verse No. 7. It is significant that the Ābhiras and the Gurjaras are reckoned as descendants of the Yādavas.

given in it. Some of these names are also found in the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

Rūpa Gosvāmin has created some immortal characters in his dramas, *Dānakeli-Kaumudī*, *Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Lalita-mādhava*. Madhumaṅgala, the son of the sage Sāndīpanī, is the jester ; his grand-mother, Paurṇamāsī, devises various ways for making Rādhā meet her lover. Lalitā and Viśākhā are the bosom friends of Rādhā and are ever solicitious for promoting her happiness. They cut jokes with Kundalatā, the wife of an elder cousin of Kṛṣṇa, regarding her attachment to Kṛṣṇa, but she always tries her best to facilitate the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. These characters have been borrowed from Rūpa's works by the Bengali poets, who have written on the Kṛṣṇa theme.

In the *Dānakeli-kaumudī*, Rūpa Gosvāmin categorically asserts through Vṛndā that Kṛṣṇa is not the son of Vasudeva, because the latter is performing a sacrifice at Govinda Kuṇḍa for the welfare of his friend's son Kṛṣṇa and his own son Balarāma.[44] Rādhā was asked by her superiors to carry a pitcher of clarified butter on her head to the place of sacrifice. Such a work was no doubt beneath her dignity, but she agreed to perform it because of its efficacy in bringing about the fulfilment of one's desire. She proceeded with four of her companions. Kṛṣṇa posted himself on the way as a collector of tools and demanded exorbitantly high amount, which it was not possible for Rādhā to pay. Kṛṣṇa was being assisted by his friends Subala and Madumaṅgala. Long altercations between the two parties ensued. At last Paurṇamāsī intervening offered Rādhā herself to Kṛṣṇa in lieu of the toll. Kṛṣṇa joyfully accepted the offer.

In the *Vidagdha-mādhava* Rūpa Gosvamin describes the

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44 *Dānakeli-kaumudī*, 22.

love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from its first awakening to the first meeting of the couple. The person with whom the semblance of marriage of Rādhā took place was called Abhimanyu, probably the Sanskritised form of the Prakrit word Ahibana, Āyāna or Rāyāna of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. He is described as an employee of Kaṁsa. He has to spend much of his time at Mathurā and his old mother, with defective eye-sight finds it extremely difficult to prevent Rādhā from meeting Kṛṣṇa. To add to her confusion Subala who looks almost exactly like Rādhā dresses himself up as a girl. Once she thought that she had caught Rādhā red-handed, but to her utter dismay the girl turned to be Subala himself. She thus became the butt of ridicule of all. Abhimanyu decided to take away Rādhā to Mathurā and Kṛṣṇa dressed himself as the goddess Gaurī and placed himself in her temple, where Rādhā came to meet him. Jaṭilā with her son Abhimanyu appeared there all on a sudden. Lalitā and Viśākhā, however, told them that the goddess being highly pleased with the devotion of Rādhā had appeared in a human form and Rādhā was asking for a boon from her. Abhimanyu became curious to learn what sort of boon she was asking for. Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of Durgā, said that Rādhā was praying for the aversion of a terrible calamity which was going to overtake her husband.

Jaṭilā enquired of the nature of the calamity and was told that Kaṁsa had resolved to sacrifice the life of Abhimanyu before the Bhairava, day after to-morrow. The mother and the son now piteously implored the goddess (that is, Kṛṣṇa), who agreed to save Abhimanyu's life on condition that Rādhā must always stay at Gokula and worship her. They readily agreed to this proposal and cancelled the plan of removing Rādhā to Mathurā. This, however, is a side issue. The main theme of the drama is the unfolding of the divine.

The *Lalitamādhavanāṭakam* introduces revolutionary

changes in the narratives related in the *Harivaṁśa* and the Purāṇas. In this drama we find that Candrāvalī and Rādhā are the two daughters of the mountain Vindhya. Pūtanā brought Rādhā to Vraja and she had to drop Candrāvalī in the river out of fear. The latter was picked up by Bhīsmaka, the king of Vidarbha ; she was later brought to Gokula, where she became known as the daughter of Candrabhānu, the brother of Vṛṣabhānu, in whose house Rādhā was reared up. Paurṇamāsī recovered Lalitā, Padmā, Bhadrā, Śaivyā and Śyāmā. Viśākhā was floating adrift in the river Yamunā and she was fetched by Jaṭilā. Kṛṣṇa made love to all these girls. Śyāmalā was discovered by Vṛndā going back home early in the morning wearing the yellow cloth of Kṛṣṇa while Padmā returned defected having spent the night in expectation of meeting Kṛṣṇa. In the second Act we find that on a day sacred to the Sun, Rādhā was to worship and Jaṭilā was in search of a priest. Kundalatā brought Kṛṣṇa disguised as the priest. Engaged in performing the *Pūjā* with Rādhā as his client Kṛṣṇa recited in Sanskrit a verse which purported to say that he was eager to kiss the lips of Rādhā, who should cast a graceful glance at him and salutation to the Sun. Jaṭilā at once remarked that she had never heard before such *mantras*. The priest retorted that she was an illiterate Ābhīra woman accustomed to hear the voice of cattle only ; what did she know of the Vedic hymns. The verse he had uttered was none other than the third Ṛk of the Śākhā of Eros. At the end of this type of worship Kundalatā asked Rādhā to satisfy the priest with liberal gifts. Rādhā replied that as she had selected her own *Devara* (younger brother of the husband) as the priest she (Kunda) must pay the *dakṣiṇā*. In the absence of Kṛṣṇa, a demon named Śaṅkhacūḍa had been sent by Kaṁsa to steal away Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa appeared on the scene and killed him.

The third Act describes the grief of the Gopīs at the departure of Kṛṣṇa for Mathurā. Rādhā and Viśākhā put an end to their life by throwing themselves into the swift currents of the Yamunā. Lalitā commits suicide by jumping from the top of a hill. A voice in the air revealed that Rādhā had gone to the other world by passing through the orb of the Sun. In the fourth Act, the grief of Kṛṣṇa at Mathurā on account of his separation from his beloved Gopīs is described. Candrāvalī, who was identical with Rukmiṇī, was taken to Kuṇḍīnapura by Rukmin with a view to getting her married to Śiśupāla. The demon Naraka carried away to Prāgjyotiṣapura the sixteen thousand and one hundred Gopīs who had performed the worship of the goddess Kātyāyanī with a view to having Kṛṣṇa as their husband. In the fifth Act, Kṛṣṇa is described as going to Kuṇḍīnanagara in Vidarbha in the guise of an actor and abducting Rukmiṇī with the connivance of her father. Rūpa Gosvāmin shows unparalleled boldness in disregarding the testimony of the *Harivaṁśa* and the Purāṇas. The Sun God, according to the sixth Act of the drama, rewarded Satrājit not only with the jewel Syamantaka, which originally was raised from the ocean and later formed the crest of Śaṅkhacūḍa, but also with a daughter, Satyabhāmā, who was none else than Rādhā. Lalitā was saved by Jāmbavāna and reared up as Jāmbavatī. When Kṛṣṇa went to the above of Jāmbavāna in search of the jewel he heard from the nurse of Jāmbavatī that the girl had got with her the images of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, whom she worshipped with great devotion. Jāmbavāna gave away Jāmbavatī in marriage to Kṛṣṇa. In the meanwhile Rādhā-Satyabhāmā got a New Vṛndāvana constructed at Dvārakā through Viśvakarman, who is described as the father of Sun's wife, Saṁjñā. Rukmiṇī tried her level best to keep off Satyabhāmā from the eyes of Kṛṣṇa. But all her efforts

proved fruitless. In the last Act, Kṛṣṇa was married to Satyabhāmā in the presence of Nanda and Yaśodā who came from Vraja to attend the nuptial ceremony. The sixteen thousand and one hundred Gopa maidens recovered from the capital of demon Naraka were also married to Kṛṣṇa. Here Rūpa Gosvāmin has contradicted the *Bhāgavata*[45] which relates that Kṛṣṇa went to Prāgjyotiṣa-pura with his wife Satyabhāmā, and having subdued Naraka carried away the sixteen thousand and the hundred princesses. Their marriage with Kṛṣṇa must have taken place long after the marriage of Satyabhāmā.

Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmin gives a delightful account of the frolics of adoloscent Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana in his *Muktācaritra*. The idea of decorating his cows with pearls on the occasion of the Diwali festival occurred to Kṛṣṇa. He tried to persuade his friends and relatives in vain to lend him some pearls. He then conceived the plan of cultivating pearls on a plot of land drilled and dressed by some body. He procured a few pieces of pearl from his mother and sowed them in the aforesaid land. He wanted to pour milk instead of water on the land so that the pearl seeds might germinate quickly. He asked his lady friends to supply him milk for this purpose. They laughed at him and refused to waste their milk on this mad venture. But within a few days the creepers bore excellent pearls in abundance. Kṛṣṇa now decorated his dear cows beautifully with these pearls. On seeing the success of his venture the Gopīs too sowed a plot of land with the pearls which they found on the ornaments taken from their elderly relatives. It is needless to say that their plan failed miserably and they could not trace the pearls they had sown. Meanwhile their superiors pressed them for returning the pearls. At this juncture

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45 *Bhāgavata*, X. 69. 4.

they appealed to Kṛṣṇa to give them some pearls in return of gold. Kṛṣṇa refused to do so on the ground that the Gopīs had not helped him in any way in the cultivation of the pearls. He demanded payment in kind from Rādhā and her friends. Then a brilliant idea occurred to Lalitā. She demanded half the amount of pearls reaped by Kṛṣṇa, as he was bound to pay this share as rent to the landlord, who was none but Rādhā. Madhumaṅgala replied that the land in Vṛndāvana really belonged to Kṛṣṇa as it was commonly known as *Kṛṣṇa-vana*. Lalitā retorted that the word *Kṛṣṇa-vana* really means a dark forest and not the forest belonging to Kṛṣṇa. She further said that it was well known that Rādhā was the genuine sovereign of Vṛndāvana. The altercation between the two parties was at last peacefully settled by Nāndīmukhī who stood surety for the satisfactory payment of the price of pearls supplied by Kṛṣṇa to the Gopīs. Kṛṣṇa related this story to Satyabhāmā at Dvārakā. She realised that Kṛṣṇa still pined for the love of Rādhā.

Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmin was the son of the feudal ruler of Saptagrāma and as such had intimate knowledge of the land revenue administration of the time. His reference to the levying of land revenue at fifty per cent of the gross produce on those who came to cultivate the land from outside is highly interesting.[46] In his *Dānakelicintāmaṇi* he alludes to a special tax on cows who damaged the forest of Rādhā.[47] Kṛṣṇa asked his friends Madhumaṅgala to calculate the amount of toll to be realised from Rādhā and her friends and warned him against the practice of acceptance of bribes by officials. Another interesting feature of this poem is Kṛṣṇa's request to each of his friends to catch hold of one of the friends of Rādhā. Thus Subala was to

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46 *Muktācaritra*, p. 206 (Berhampore ed.).

47 *Dānakelicintāmaṇi*, Verse 112.

catch hold of Viśākhā, Ujjvala to captivate Citrā, Vasanta to arrest Campakalatā and Tuṅgavinyā, and Koila to surround Lalitā.[48] In other respects Raghunātha follows Rūpa.

Jīva Gosvāmin, the nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana, elaborates the ideas of his uncles in a large number of poetical, theological and philosophical works and commentaries. Rūpa has given a long list of sixty-four qualities of Kṛṣṇa in his *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* and Jīva has increased it to eighty-five. According to both, Kṛṣṇa is eternally youthful and possessed of all the excellent physical characteristics. Among the qualities of his head and heart, Rūpa mentions his acquaintance with many and strange languages, truthfulness, great conversational power, bravery, modesty and compassion. He is forgiving, profound, contended and placid, dutiful, liberal in gift, friend of the devotee but beneficent to all, and above all a charmer of women. The four qualities which are exclusive to him are his *līlā* or divine sport, abundance of beloved persons obtained by love, sweetness of his flute and sweetness of his beauty.[49] Jīva Gosvāmin adds to these some other characteristics like straightforwardness, cleverness in accomplishing several things simultaneously and the attribute of carrying infinitely pleasurable presence to all creatures and even to inanimate beings.[50]

Jīva Gosvāmin in his *Kṛṣṇa-Sandarbha* tries to prove that Nanda and Yaśodā are the real parents of Kṛṣṇa and not Vasudeva and Devakī. With consummate sophistry, he argues that one does not necessarily become the son of that out of which one comes forth. Nṛsiṁha came out of the pillar, but no body says that the he was the son of the pillar.

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48 *Ibid.*, 34-35.

49 *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, I. I. 6-9.

50 *Prīti-Sandharbha*, sections 116-117.

Kṛṣṇa entered the womb of Uttarā with a view to saving the life of Parīkṣita against the arrow shot by Aśvatthāmā, he did not thereby became the son of Uttarā. The *vātsalya-prema*, the feeling of affection for the child, is the real criterion for the parenthood. He, therefore, comes to the conclusion that Kṛṣṇa is known as the son of Yaśodā without entering her womb.[51] But later in his life he wrote in his *Gopālacampū*, the first half of which was completed in 1588, that Kṛṣṇa was actually born in the womb of Yaśodā.[52] He states that God fulfills the desire of his devotees. Vasudeva and Devakī wanted to have the four-armed God as their son; while Nanda and Yaśodā always yearned for the two-armed God as their progeny. It was Yogamāyā who transferred the two-armed Kṛṣṇa to the prison of Kaṁsa where the four-armed Kṛṣṇa became merged in the two armed son of Nanda and Yaśodā. Then she herself took the birth of their daughter. Later on Vasudeva took her to Mathurā after placing Kṛṣṇa by the side of Yaśodā.

Jīva Gosvāmin also narrates that Parjanya, the father of Nanda, was the brother of Śūra, the father of Vasudeva. As Śūra's mother happened to be a Kṣatriya lady, Vasudeva was reckoned a Kṣatriya while Parjanya became a Vaiśya, because his mother was an Ābhīra woman. He quotes Manu (X. 8-15) to show that a woman born of a Kṣatriya father and Śūdra mother is known as Ugra; an Ambaṣṭha is born of a Brāhmaṇa father and Ugra mother; and an Ābhīra is the progeny of the Brāhmaṇa father and Ābhīra mother. But in his anxiety to show that the Ābhīra is not a low caste he refers to the *Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*, which states that when Brahmā was engaged in performing the sacrifice he married an Ābhīra maiden.[53]

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51 *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, section 150.

52 *Gopāla-campū*, Pūrva Campū, III. 68. 76.

53 *Ibid.*, Pūrva Campū, III. 20.

Parjanya settled at Mahāvana. He is described by Jīva as a very rich cowherd of charitable disposition. He married a lady named Varīyasī (which literally means superior) and by her got five sons, namely Upananda, Abhinanda, Nanda, Sannanda and Nandana. In his old age he anointed his eldest son Upananda as the successor to his throne, but the latter conferred the kingdom of Gokula on Nanda in the presence of great men like Vasudeva. Nanda married Yaśodā, the daughter of Sumukha.[54] In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* Kṛṣṇa tells Nanda on the eve of the worship of Indra, "we are neither cultivators, nor traders. Our god is the cow and we are dwellers in the forest. We do not live within walls, nor have we got doors to our house."[55] In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, too, we find Kṛṣṇa, telling Nanda the following words in order to dissuade him from worshipping Indra : "Father, we habitually reside in the forest and mountains ; we have got nothing to do with villages, towns and *janapadas*."[56] The influence of the royal court and feudal society with which the principal Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana were closely associated before they met Caitanya, was responsible for transforming the pastoral headman Nanda into a regular feudal prince. Following the footsteps of Rūpa Gosvāmin, Govindadāsa Kavirāja and Rāiśekhara have described the evening session of the court of Nanda. Govindadāsa describes how the court was decorated with silken cloths of variegated colours with garlands made of pearls hanging at places.[57] Rāiśekhara takes delight in giving a detailed description of the dress and ornaments of Kṛṣṇa as a young Crown Prince. When Kṛṣṇa goes

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54 *Ibid.*, III. 31.

55 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 10. 26-33.

56 *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, X. 24. 24.

57 *Padakalpataru*, 2693.

to the court a retinue of slaves precedes and follows him.[58] No serious work appears to have been transacted in the court. The court musicians sing and dance and the court jesters amuse the young princes, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Nanda distributed much wealth to the deserving persons.[59] Kavi Karṇapūra narrates how a host of servants attended on Kṛṣṇa when he returned from the field in the evening.[60]

Jīva Gosvāmin cannot bear the idea that the infant Kṛṣṇa should be tied with an ordinary rope by his mother, as described in the *Bhāgavata*.[61] He says that Yaśodā took the silken tape with which she tied her hairs and used it for punishing Kṛṣṇa.[62] The most remarkable feature of Jīva's *Gopālacampū* is the account of the return of Kṛṣṇa to Vṛndāvana from Dvārakā and of his nuptial ceremony with the Gopīs. He states that Kṛṣṇa married ten million Gopīs, but he narrates with elaborate details his marriage with Rādhā only.[63] Here, not Brahmā as described in the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, but Vṛṣabhānu, the father of Rādhā, gives away the bride with plenty of dowry.

According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Kṛṣṇa sent Uddhava to Vraja with a message for the Gopīs asking them to control their mind and to reflect on Kṛṣṇa in their heart.[64] Jīva Gosvāmin, however, represents the Gopīs as explaining away the significance of these verses and interpreting them really as a message of love.[65] This seems to have influenced Lalluji Lall, who made a free translation of the *Bhāgavata* in

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58 *Ibid.*, 2692.
59 *Ibid.*, 2696.
60 *Kṛṣṇāhṇika Kaumudī*, 5. 49-60.
61 *Bhāgavata*, X. 9. 12-14.
62 *Gopālacampū*, Pūrva, VIII. 51.
63 *Ibid.*, Uttara, XXXIII. 4.
64 *Bhāgavata* X. 34-35.
65 *Gopālacampū*, Uttara, XII. 36-40.

Hindi in his *Prema-sāgara* in the first decade of the last century. He states that Uddhava conveyed to the Gopīs the following message : "He who is the First Male, the Imperishable One, Hari, on him you have always fixed your affection, and whom all extol as the invisible, the unseen, the impenetrable whom you regard as your husband ; and as earth, wind, water, fire, and dwell in the body, so the Supreme Being dwells in you, but by the quality of illusion appears separate. Continue to fix your recollection and your thoughts on him ; he always remains accessible to his votaries, and from contiguity, perception and meditation are destroyed ; on this account, Hari has gone to a distance and fixed his habitation, and the divine Kṛṣṇacandra explained this also to me and said, that, playing on the flute he called you to the woods, and when he saw your love and the pain you felt at separation evinced, then he danced together with you the circular dance." To these words the Gopīs replied :

"We have heard your words, now remain apart from us ;
You have told us of Knowledge, devotion, wisdom ;
You tell us to abandon meditation, and point out to us the sky—
On whose sports our mind is fixed ; him you call Nārāyaṇa.
He who, from his childhood, bestowed pleasure upon us, how has he become Invisible—the unseen ?
He who is possessed of all good qualities and gifted with all beauties of form, how can he be quality-less and form-less ;
Since in his dear body our souls are wrapped up, who will give ear to your words ?
One of the company arose, and after reflection, said, "Conciliate Udho.
Say nothing to him, sisters ! but hear his words, and continue gazing, on his countenance,

One said, 'It is not his fault ; he came sent by Kubjā.
Now, as Kubjā has instructed him, that very strain he sings.
Kṛṣṇa would never speak thus, as, since his arrival in Vraja, he has spoken.
By hearing such words, sister ! thorns pierce us—we cannot endure to hear.
He tells us to abandon carnal pleasure and practise devotion; how can to Mādho have spoken thus ?
Inaudible repetition of the Divine name penance, abstinence, vows, and religious observances ; all these are the (befitting) practices of widows.
May the youth Kānhāi live on through successive ages ; he who bestows happiness on our heads.
While one's husband survives, who makes use of the ashes of cowdung ? Tell us where this custom is observed !
For us vows, devotion, fasting are in this, to regard with unceasing affection the feet of the son of Nanda."[66]

Jīva Gosvāmin did not attach to Kubjā the importance imputed by Lalluji Lall.

The life of Kṛṣṇa was written in various Indian dialects all over the country in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Amongst the pre-Caitanya writers were Bhalana, Keśava Kāyastha and Narsi Mehta of Gujarat, Śaṅkaradeva of Assam, Mālādhara Basu, Guṇarājakhān of Bengal and probably also Jagannāthadāsa of Orissa.

Bhalana is said to have been born in 1439 and lived for one hundred years. As his son Viṣṇudāsa wrote the Uttarakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in 1518 A.D. he must have flourished in the latter half of the fifteenth century. He wrote the *Daśamaskāṇḍa* in Gujarati. There are occasional variations from the original *Bhāgavata*. Keśava Kāyastha composed his *Kṛṣṇakrīḍā Kāvya* in forty cantos in 1472 A. D.

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66 *Premasāgara* translated by E. B. Eastwick,

The most famous Gujarati poet, however, to write on the *Bhāgavata* theme was Narsi or Narasiṁha Mehta. Orthodox opinion in Gujarat assigns him to 1414 and 1481 A.D., but scholars like Ānandshankar Dhruva and K.M. Munshi hold that he must be placed in the sixteenth century (c. 1500-1580). The *Haramālā* attributed to Narsi bears the Vikrama Samvat date 1512 corresponding to 1455 A.D. and he is said to have been put to test by Ra Māṇḍalika of Junāgaḍha (c. 1433-1473), but it is suspected that the poem was written by somebody else. K.M. Jhaveri states, "Till the controversy ends finally, the orthodox view may be adopted, specially as Dr. Dhruva's opinion is not conclusive but recommendatory".[67] We agree with this view, espacially because of the fact that had he been a contemporary of Vallabhācārya and the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana he would have come under their influence. In that case these sects would have been proud to include him as the disciple of their Masters. But no such reference is found anywhere.

The influence of Jayadeva on Narsi Mehta is profound. In his *Śṛṇgāra-mālā* Kṛṣṇa declares : "Listen you, women : I have led a life of continence from birth. I am not known (as such) to the bulk of mankind, a rare person knows it. Even the Vedas cannot fathom my mystery. Nārada, Sanaka and others extol me. The credit of knowing me belongs only to the Gopīs of Vraja and to the poet Jayadeva, who knew what love for me means." Again in his *Surata-saṁgrāma* he describes himself as the emissary of Rādhā, while Jayadeva is depicted as the messenger employed by Kṛṣṇa. This work is entirely an original composition of the poet. It describes a veritable love-battle between Rādhā and her ten Gopīs on the one side and Kṛṣṇa with his ten companions on the

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67 K. M. Jhaveri, *Milestones in Gujarati Literature*, p. 43.

other. The cause of conflict lay in the refusal of Rādhā to pay the toll when she went out to sell curds. Kṛṣṇa abused her and Rādhā, like Caṇḍī incarnate, caught hold of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was making preparations for fighting against her, when suddenly Nanda was found passing through the place. Both the combatants assumed instantaneously an innocent appearance. They decided to fight out the battle on the full moon night. The condition laid down was that the vanquished must become victor's slave. On the full moon night Rādhā with her ten friends attired themselves for the fray; but before undertaking the severe encounter they considered it desirable to try peaceful negotiation. The poet says that he himself was selected as ambassador for asking the cowherds to surrender unconditionally. The friends of Kṛṣṇa were divided in opinion regarding the advisability of fighting. One section said that as there was no joy in victory over such an adversary and no ignominy in defeat it would be discreet to surrender. But Kṛṣṇa felt it ignoble to submit to women. While they were thus discussing, Narasiṁha Mehta appeared on the scene with his message. He was taken to be a thief and beaten. But he did not lose his dignity as an ambassador and delivered his message. He further pleaded; "Do not consider it an easy thing to vanquish women. As the lioness is more powerful than the lion so is the cowherdess stronger and tougher than the cowherds." But Kṛṣṇa and his friends were in no mood to accept his advice. They, on the other hand, selected Jayadeva, the poet to persuade the Gopīs to surrender. Rādhā turned a deaf ear to Jayadeva's message and said that women are superior to men, they are the primal forces of life, mothers of men, gods and demons, and as such it behoves men to submit themselves to women. Thus the peaceful negotiations failed and both the parties marched for the encounter. The weapons used, however, were not

swords and clubs but kisses, embraces and side-long glances. In the first round of the battle the cowherds were defeated but Kṛṣṇa rushed forward to their rescue. Rādhā was overpowered by him but she recovered her ground instantly. She rallied round her friends and shot the arrow of anxiety. This the cowherds could not resist. Some of them fell down and Kṛṣṇa himself fainted. He was carried away by his friends. But the party of Rādhā pursued their enemies to the very outskirts of Vraja. Rādhā occupied the conquered territory. This is an original interpretation of the character of Rādhā. Some of the modern critics are full of praise for Ananta Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa's Rādhā because she hurls retorts and abuses on Kṛṣṇa ; but Narasiṁha Mehta's Rādhā is far more valiant and heroic, and she is never mean, vindictive and mendacious like the former.

Narasiṁha Mehta's *Rāsa Sahasrapadī* consists of 189 poems and about one thousand couplets. It is by no means an imitation or adaptation of the *Rāsalīlā*, described in the *Bhāgavata*. The poet here plunges, as it were, in the very midst of dancing and describes the performances of Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs in sweetest melodies. Rhyme after rhyme follow with easy grace, elevating the readers to the spiritual dreamland as it were. Occasionally he translates the substance of one or two episodes of the *Bhāgavata*. For example, his poem No. 96 states how the Gopīs in their grief of separation completely identified themselves with Kṛṣṇa ; and poem No. 108 purporting to be the enquiries made by them from trees, plants and creepers of Vṛndāvana regarding the whereabouts of the son of Nanda. But these are few and far between. Narasiṁha Mehta has really composed a charming and original poem under the caption of *Rāsa Sahasrapadī*. The poet identifies himself completely with the Gopīs and gives up his vanity as a male being.

If we turn from the west to the extreme east of India we find that Śaṅkaradeva translated the *Bhāgavata* in Assamese in the sixteenth century. He was an elder contemporary of Caitanya, his lifetime falling between 1449 and 1568 A.D. One of the eldest manuscripts of his *Bhāgavata* is dated 1461 *Śaka* or 1539 A.D. and Harinārāyaṇa Datta Barua has prepared his edition on its basis. Śaṅkara has got wonderful command over the language as well as metres. He uses a number of onomatopoeic words by the wrath of Indra and makes the scene a vivid one. Śaṅkaradeva prefaces his *Rāsalīlā* with the frank avowal that Keśava made a conquest of Cupid and its perusal will lead to *mokṣa*. It must be noted that the Caitanyaites would have nothing to do with *mokṣa* and remain contented with pure devotion. Śaṅkaradeva makes Kṛṣṇa to tell the Gopīs that Vṛndāvana at night is infested with demons, tigers, bears and boars (X. 1763). The name of Rādhā does not occur in his *Bhāgavata*. He does not follow the chronological order of events when the Gopīs in their madness over the pang of separation played the part of Kṛṣṇa. For examples, the Gopīs imitate the holding of Govardhana and the trampling down upon the serpent Kālīya first and then the weeping of child Kṛṣṇa at being caught hold of by Yaśodā. This sort of disregard of sequence of events is more in consonance with the mental state of the Gopīs than what we find in the original.

Śaṅkaradeva shows considerable originality in defending the amours of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs. In support of the *Bhāgavata* theory that the ordinary mortal standards do not apply to those who are effulgent, he cites the cases of Brahmā, Candra, Indra and Viśvāmitra. Then he brings out the fact that Kṛṣṇa is the very heart and soul, the controller of the inner life of all the Gopīs and the cowherds and as such there can be no question of his transgressing the law

relating to connection with other people's wives. He concludes the argument by asserting that Kṛṣṇa sported in this way with a view to attracting the mind of the devotees who became purified by hearing and singing it. The *Bhāgavata* is considered as the highest authority by the Mahāpuruṣiā sect, who are the followers of Śaṅkaradeva.

In Northern India, works based on the *Bhāgavata* were written by Sūrdās, Nanddās, Lalach Dās, Caturdās and Gopīnāth Dvija, all of whom flourished in the sixteenth century. Sūrdās was a disciple of Vallabhācārya and an associate of his son Viṭṭhalanātha. No exact date of his birth and death can be ascertained, but according to some scholars he is said to have lived between 1478 and 1583 A.D. He repeatedly asserts that his *Bhāgavata* is based on the twelve Books which Vyāsa spoke to Śuka (I. 225) and the latter related to King Parīkṣita (X. 620). But his work includes much that is not found in the original and also leaves out many of the incidents related in the Sanskrit *Bhāgavata*. He has embellished the stories of child Kṛṣṇa and has described with great gusto in more than forty poems how the Lord learnt to stand on his legs and to walk step by step. The background of the first amorous meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa[68] is taken from the opening verse of the *Gītagovinda* which again is based on the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* and not on the *Bhāgavata*. The *Paṅghaṭa Līlā* and the *Dāna Līlā* in which Sūrdās describes the drawing of water by the Gopīs from the Yamunā and the collection of tolls from them by Kṛṣṇa are not to be found in the original *Bhāgavata*. In depicting the *Rāsalīlā* he brings out Rādhā as the real heroine. He introduces an entirely novel incident in which Kṛṣṇa marries Rādhā according to the Gāndharva rites. Like Rūpa Gosvāmin,

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68 *Sūrsāgara*, No. 1302.

Sūrdās makes Candrāvalī a rival to Rādhā in the affection of Kṛṣṇa. Like Raghunātha Bhāgavatācārya, again, Sūrdās has related the subject matter of the first nine Books of the *Bhāgavata* briefly in 388 poems. While the first fortynine chapters of the Tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata* relating to the early life of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja has been elaborated by Sūrdās in 3936 poems, the last forty-one chapters of the original book are summarized in 142 poems only. The philosophical eleventh Book receives only six poems from Sūrdās. In spite of these deviations from the original the influence of Sūrdās in moulding the spiritual life of the Hindi speaking world is second only to that of Tulsīdās.

Nanddās, a disciplie of Viṭṭhalanātha, wrote a book named *Bhāṣā Daśama Skandha*. It ends with the twentyeighth chapter of the original book, but it does not give a faithful translation of the Sanskrit work. It was more or less a summary of events. He has also briefly related the events contained in the five chapters of the *Rāsalīlā* in his work entitled *Rāsa-Pañchādhyāyī*. It keeps more closely to the original than Sūrdās's. It does not, therefore, mention the name Rādhā. But in his *Śyāma-sagāī* he has described the marriage of Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa on the negotiation of their mothers. Nanddās has composed two small books, *Rukmiṇī-maṅgala* and *Sudāmā-carita*, on the basis of the *Bhāgavata*. He is much inferior to Sūrdās in poetic power. In 1530 A.D. Lalach Dās completed his *Haricaritra*, which relates in 95 chapters the life story of Kṛṣṇa. Critics, however, hold that the last forty chapters of the book are not the composition of Lalach, but of one Prahlāda. Caturdās translated the eleventh Book of the *Bhāgavata* in *Brajabhāṣā* in 1552 A.D. Thirty years later Gopīnāth Dvija made a free translation of the first half of the tenth Book in the same dialect,

Evidences of the same type of extensive influence of the *Bhāgavata* are to be found in Southern India too. Kanakadāsa, a contemporary of Purandaradāsa, who flourished between 1484 and 1564 A.D., wrote *Mahana Taraṅgiṇī*, in the Kannaḍa language on the basis of the tenth Book of the *Bhāgavata*. Further south, in Kerala, Tuncatt Rāmānujan Ezhuttaccan made a free translation of the *Bhāgavata* in Malayalam. He is believed to have been an elder contemporary of Melpattūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, the famous author of *Nārāyaṇiam*. The ground was prepared for him in the fifteenth century by Śaṅkaran Paṇikkar and Rāman Paṇikkar who composed *Śrī Kṛṣṇavijaya* and *Bhāgavata Daśama* respectively.

Ezhuttaccan, like Sūrdas, appears to have been a devotee of *vātsalya-bhāva* and fascinated by the sweet pranks of Child Kṛṣṇa. He gives expression to the anxieties of Yaśodā for Kṛṣṇa who was late in coming back from the pasture land. In describing the *Kālīya-damana* incident the poet feels so much pain at the bitting of Kṛṣṇa by the serpent that he exclaims in the midst of narration: "The evil-hearted are like that. My lord, dwell safely in my heart, don't go anywhere."

The Kerala poet has evinced much originality in describing the *Rāsalīlā*. He has curtailed considerably the elaborate description of the original and has tried to make the situation more dramatic. While the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* merely states that in response to the melodious call of the flute the Gopīs hurried to Kṛṣṇa with robes and ornaments disordered, the Malayalam version says, "with the necklace round the waist, the *sārī* at the neck, the bangles on the anklets and anklets on the wrists, garlands on the ears, ear rings on the head, the black collyrium on the breast and *kumkum* in their eyes—thus in hurry they ran."

The Malayalam poet describes the disappearence of Kṛṣṇa from the place of *Rāsa* as concealing himself behind

his *Māyā*. The search for Kṛṣṇa is dismissed in one sentence. Thus : "Then searching for the lord of the Gopas in the forest and distraught by love, they wailed and questioned the trees, creepers, flowers, birds and animals." The identification of the Gopīs with Kṛṣṇa appears to the poet 'ridiculous.' The poet writes that some acted as Kṛṣṇa, showing all the sports and pranks of Kṛṣṇa like the killing of Pūtanā. Some danced. Wandering in search of him in this way they saw the footprints of the servant of the Gods (*Deva-sevaka*) mingled with the footmarks of a woman and afterwords her footprints were not visible. Then they concluded that Mādhava had succumbed to the charms of the woman and carried her on his back. After somtime they saw Rādhā, who told her friends that the beautiful-eyed lord had forsaken her also. Rādhā said : "I was proud, I considered myself superior to you all. In my vanity, I told Mukunda that I could not walk and asked him to carry me. He stood ready to do so and at the same moment vanished and looking for him I have come across you." As they wandered together seeking the Lord of the gods, the moon set and then they had to come back.

The translation or the adaptation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannaḍa, and Malayalam shows that a higher bond of culture and spiritual unity was being forged throughout the length and breadth of India in the sixteenth century. Though the process had begun even before the birth of Caitanya, it was certainly accelerated by his dynamic personality. While emphasis was laid on the prowess and grandeur of Kṛṣṇa in the pre-Caitanya era, his sweetness and loving charm became the predominant note of the works based on *Bhāgavata* in the post-Caitanya age.

Poets in Orissa began to write on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa even before the advent of Caitanya. Rāi Rāmānanda must

have written his drama, *Jagannātha-vallabha*, before he came in contact with Caitanya, because it does not contain any obeisance to him though almost every verse refers to King Pratāparudra. It describes the love affair of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from its first awkening to its natural fruition. But what characterises it from the other narratives on the subject is the fact that when Rādhā sends her messenger, Śaśīmukhī, with a love latter for Kṛṣṇa, the latter assumes a pontifical character and delivers a sermon on the need of observing chastity of women. Rādhā becomes mortified at this refusal. But her friend Madanikā takes the initiative herself in sending another messenger to Kṛṣṇa with a picture of Rādhā. This time Kṛṣṇa reciprocates the love of Rādhā and indicates his attachment to her by writing a verse, below her picture. As in Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Vidagdha-mādhava* Paurṇamāsī or Yogamāyā brings about the union of the two lovers, so in this drama that role is played by Madanikā. There is no Lalitā or Viśākhā in this drama, because these immoral characters had not yet been created by Rūpa.

Jagannātha Dāsa probably wrote his famous *Bhāgavata* before the influence of Caitanya had made itself felt in Orissa. He does not mention the name of Rādhā in his *Bhāgavata*. The lady with whom Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the company of Gopīs is called Vṛndāvatī by him. He does not regard her as the eternal beloved of Kṛṣṇa, but as one who was merely reaping the fruit of her austerities practised previously. The Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism could not agree to such a view. In Orissa, however, Jagannātha Dāsa's identification of the Gopī was accepted and followed by Bhūpati Paṇḍit in his *Prema Pañcāmṛta* and by Bhakta Charaṇ Dāsa in his *Mathurā Maṅgala*. The former also stated that when Vṛndāvatī was bewailing her desertion by Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā came to console her.

To a large number of devotees Rādhā came to occupy a far more important position than even Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa Gosvāmin considered himself as a female attendant of Rādhā named Rūpamañjarī. Raghunāthadāsa Gosvāmin expresses his exclusive attachment to Rādhā in his *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*. He waits upon her as a maid-servant and helps her in her bath and other intimate services.

The Rādhāvallabha sect, founded by Hita Harivaṁśa in the sixteenth century, accords the highest place to Rādhā. According to the tradition recorded in the old literature of the sect, Rādhā herself is said to be its founder. It was she who initiated Hita Harivaṁśa to spiritual life.[69] Some votaries of Rādhā wanted, as it were, to avenge the wrong that has been done to their deity by the author of the *Bhāgavata* in not mentioning her name in his work. One of them, named Vaṁśī Ali, who lived in Vṛndāvana in the nineteenth century, composed a poem entitled *Śrī-Rādhikā mahārasa*, in which the name of Kṛṣṇa does not find any place at all. In it we find Rādhā playing on the flute and calling her female friends to the forest at a full moon night. She at first playfully rebukes them for coming to her at night but later on sings and dances with them. Like Kṛṣṇa she disappears with one of her companions. Those who are left behind become so much disconsolate that they begin to imitate the past doing of Rādhā and make a frantic search for her. Rādhā at last graciously makes her appearance and plays with them. At last she plunges into the river Yamunā and sports with them. It is needless to state that all these are in close imitation of the *Rāsalīlā*, described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, but Rādhā has been substituted for Kṛṣṇa in this poem in Brajabhāṣā.

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69 Lalitacharan Gosvāmi, *Śrī Harivaṁśa Gosvāmī Sampradāya aur Sāhitya*, pp. 215-223.

Lecture VI

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LIFE OF KṚṢṆA

Bankimchandra Chatterjee was the first Indian scholar to undertake a critical study of the life of Kṛṣṇa. He was acquainted with the main trends of criticism of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, from the works of Orientalists like Weber, Lassen, Goldstucker, Colebrooke, Muir, Bournouf and Wilson.[1] His critical acumen was of such a high order that he could easily discriminate between a mere hypothesis and a logical conclusion of these European scholars. His sense of humour was keen and his expression was highly felicitious. All these factors have contributed to make his *Kṛṣṇacaritra* a classic of the Bengali literature.

Bankimchandra, however, wrote this great work with a purpose, and not merely for advancement of learning. We get an idea of his object from the article, entitled *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, which he contributed to the journal *Baṅga-darśana* early in 1875.[2] He wanted to hold up before the people an ideal hero, capable of unifying the warring petty kingdoms into a national state. He was the first great writer who tried to infuse the new spirit of nationalism into the mind of Indians through inspiring novels, songs and essays. To him Kṛṣṇa was the perfect embodiment of the best ideals of humanity. He contrasted four stages in the representation of the life of Kṛṣṇa—the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata*, Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* and Vidyāpati's songs. He laid down three fundamental principles which distinguish the portrayal of the character by one poet from that of another. These are due to national character,

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1 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, 1, 4, 7, 13.

2 *Baṅgadarśana*, *Caitra* 1281, pp. 605-611

social environment and the personality of the poet. He said that the age in which the *Mahābhārata* was composed, India had attained a high stage of civilization, but signs of internal quarrel were already visible. The way in which the character of Kṛṣṇa has been depicted in the *Mahābhārata* is unparalled in world. There is not even a faint trace in it of those episodes of his early life at Vraja, which have been elaborated in the *Bhāgavata*. These constitute the sole subject-matter of the poems of Jayadeva and Vidyāpati. Bankim considered the love of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs as nothing but an allegory of the relation of Puruṣa with Prakṛti as delineated in the Sāṁkhya philosophy. But he regretted that the allegory had vanished altogether in the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva. As the nation had become decadent and forgotten all about our heroic past Jayadeva produced nothing but a sensual poem. Kṛṣṇa, accordidg to the *Mahābhārata*, was a far-sighted statesman, bent upon achieving the unity of India. But Jayadeva has painted him as wholly engrossed in love affairs. In this connection it is interesting to note that to Bankim, Vidyāpati appaered as a poet singing mournful songs under the influence of the renaissance, which was just having its beginning after several centur es of Muslim rule. Bankim thought that Jayadeva looked only at the exterior of Kṛṣṇa, whereas Vidyāpati analysed his inmost feelings.[3]

This interesting article indicates that Bankimchandra was pondering over the problem of interpreting the life of Kṛṣṇa nine years before the publication of his essays on *Kṛṣṇacaritra*

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3. *Ibid.*, pp. 610-611. It is worthnoting here that to Rabindranath Caṇḍidāsa was the poet of sorrow and Vidyāpati sang only of pleasure (*Prācina Sāhitya*). The songs of Vidyāpati from Nepal and Rāmabhadrapura *M*ss. had not been published at that time.

in the Bengali Monthly journal *Pracāra* in 1884 A.D. After having contributed articles on the same topic for twenty months[4] he got them published in the form of a book in 1886.[5] In this book he said that the oldest account of the life of Kṛṣṇa is to be found in the *Māhābhārata*, and those incidents which are not related there are to be discarded as mere poetic fancies.[6] But this was not all. He was not prepared to accept as genuine even the episodes mentioned in the epic if they did not tally with his pre-conceived idea of Kṛṣṇa. Thus according to him the verses referring to Kṛṣṇa's life at Vṛndāvana as reported to have been uttered by Śiśupāla at the *Rājasūya* ceremony were interpolations.[7] He emphatically stated that the allegations of love affairs of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs were all baseless; they were mere products of fanciful imagination of the writers of the *Purāṇas*. He went further and said that the story of Kṛṣṇa's transfer to the house of Nanda at midnight, and all the incidents relating to his boyhood and adolescence at Vraja were false and baseless. He even denied that Kaṁsa was the maternal uncle of Kṛṣṇa.[8] He quoted the words of Arjuna from the *Udyogaparvan* recounting the

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4 *Pracāra*, *Āśvin* 1291 (=1884 Oct.) to *Āṣāḍha* (=July 1886).

5 The first edition of the *Krṣṇacaritra* is available in the Baṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat. It consits of 198 pages while the second edition published in 1892 covered 492+30 pages

6 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, 1st ed., p. 3

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. These verses have been found in all the manuscripts collected by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and been accepted as genuine in the Critical edition of the Mbh. II. 38. 4-11. The influence of Bankim, however, is so great that even a researcher of the eminence of Dr. J. N. Banerjea writes that according to scholars these verses are interpolations (*Pañcopāsanā*, p. 45 f. n.) Dr. Banerjea had probably in his mind R. G. Bhandarkar's opinion (*Vaiṣṇavism* etc. p. 38) also.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

valourous achievements of Kṛṣṇa including the defeat of Bhoja king at the *Svayambara* of Rukmiṇī, victory over the kings of Gandhāra, Pāṇḍya, Kaliṅga, Vārāṇasī, destruction of Ekalavya, Kaṁsa, Śālva and Naraka. The last items he considered as unhistorical apparently because miracles were involved in the first and Kṛṣṇa's marriage with sixteen thousand wives was implied in the second.[9]

In the first edition of his *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, Bankim quoted the passage relating to the killing of Kaṁsa from the Bengali translation of the *Mahābhārata* edited by Kali Prasanna Sinha and said in the footnote that he had not compared the translation with the original. The mistake committed by the translator remained undetected even at the time of publication of the second edition six years later.[10]

Bankimchandra changed and modified many of his views in the second edition, in the preface of which he admitted that he had changed his opinion regarding the incidents of the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa. He also said that the *Kṛṣṇacaritra* as depicted in his article published in the *Baṅgadarśana* was as different from the life of Kṛṣṇa now presented as light is from darkness. He attributed the change of opinion to his mature age, greater investigation and more intense thinking. He boldly said that if any one did not change his opinion he must be either endowed with supernatural

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9 *Ibid.*, p. 147.

10 The translator says that Kaṁsa married two daughters of Jarāsandha named Sahadevā and Anujā [Kali Prasanna Sinha's Mbh. II, 13, (p. 211)]. But the original (Cr. ed. II. 13. 30) says that Kaṁsa married the Anujā or sisters of Sahadeva (son of Jarāsandha). The admission of Bankim that he depended on the Bengali translation is significant. But in fairness to him it must be said that he did compare many other passages with the original, e.g. his *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, 2nd edition, III. 1 (Footnote in p. 114).

powers or a foolish and ignorant person. He now admitted that Kṛṣṇa's transfer to Gokula by Vasudeva might be accepted as a historical fact.[11] But he refused to believe that his hero could pilfer butter in his childhood. He interpreted incidents like the turning down of the cart, destruction of Tṛṇāvartta Vatsāsura, Vakāsura and Aghāsura and suppression of the serpent Kālīya as mere allegory.

Bankimchandra was in some difficulty in explaining away the great miracle of Kṛṣṇa's holding the Govardhana mountain for seven days. Now he confessed that the verses containing allegations made by Śiśupāla against Kṛṣṇa at the *Rājasūya* sacrifice were not interpolations. He was candid enough also to admit that the Govardhana was not a mere mole-hill as alleged by Śiśupāla but a real hill. The incident is related in the *Harivaṁśa*,[12] *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,[13] *Bhāgavata*[14] and many other *Purāṇas* though. Bankim did not refer to these. But he refused to believe any thing which was supernatural in character. He concluded that Kṛṣṇa considered it useless to render worship to Indra, which is typified by the sky and thought that the food should be offered to the poor people and the cows.

He then took up the consideration of the case of the Gopīs. He pointed out that the Gopīs are not referred to in the *Mahābhārata*.[15] But Kṛṣṇa's sports with them

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11 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, and ed. (Sāhitya Pariṣat ed.), p. 68.

12 *Harivaṁśa*, II. 18.

13 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 11.

14 *Bh.* X. 26.

15 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, II. V. The *Mahābhārata* was not concerned with the early life of Kṛṣṇa. But there is one indirect evidence to show that the author or one of the authors of the *Mahābhārata* knew that Kṛṣṇa had fascination for the Gopis. When Subhadrā was being sent for the first time to her mother-in-law's house she was dressed as a Gopālikā (I. 213. 171). Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita* refers to Śauri (Kṛṣṇa, 1. 45) and also to

has been related in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Harivaṁśa* and the *Bhāgavata*. He quoted the major portion of the thirteenth chapter of the fifth book of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describing the *Rāsalīlā* and other incidents. In translating the verses, however, he took the root *ram* to mean to play and the words like *Ratipriya* to signify fond of playing. But he was not able to explain away the verse (13. 54) which stated that a Gopī skilled in the art of singing his praises embraced and kissed him, though he rendered the active voice of the original into passive voice.[16]

He, however, interpreted the whole affair as an innocent play and quoted the customs of European society, in which dancing of young men with young women was not considered in any way reprehensible. While explaining away the description of the *Rāsa* in the *Harivaṁśa*, he, however, said that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* has described the joyous frolics of fickle girls. In the case of the *Harivaṁśa*, according to him, they were passionate women. Then he adversely commented upon the bad state of the *Bhāgavata* in describing the *Vastra-haraṇa* of the Gopīs, though he admired the best spiritual tone of this *Purāṇa*. He again condemned Jayadeva for perverting the innocent sports of Kṛṣṇa to sexual orgy in the name of religion. He reiterated in this connection the urgent need of re-interpreting the life of Kṛṣṇa with a view to re-awakening the country.[17] He emphatically

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Gopa Yoṣitas (IV. 14). Sir R. G. Bhandarkar held that all the *Mahābhārata* passages containing any references to the Gopis are interpolations. But the researches of the Institute, associated with his name, show that at least this passage is genuine (*Mbh.* Cr. ed. *Ādiparvan*, p. 830). Bankimchandra considered the invocation of Draupadi to Kṛṣṇa as *Gopijanapriya* as genuine, but the critical edition has treated it as an interpolation.

16 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, II. V (p. 81).

17 *Ibid.*, II. 7 (p. 93).

stated again that in the whole world none can equal Kṛṣṇa in purity of character and in the possession of all the good qualities.

Bankimchandra devoted a long chapter to prove that the name of Rādhā is not found in any of the *Purāṇas* excepting the *Brahma-vaivarta*, whose original version has been lost. He showed that the current version of this *Purāṇa* is full of absurd tales. But it must be said to the credit of the critical acumen of Bankim that he was the first modern scholar to prove that Jayadeva was indebted to this *Purāṇa* for the introductory verse of his *Gītagovinda*.[18] The conclusion which Bankim drew regarding the crediblity of the incidents of early life of Kṛṣṇa was that Vasudeva sent his wife Rohinī and two sons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Gokula out of fear of Kaṁsa, and that Kṛṣṇa spent the period of his boyhood and adolescences there. His beauty and grace made him dear to all. He grew up as an exceptionally vigorous youth, who saved the cowherds by destroying the harmful animals. He was affectionate to the boys and girls of the Gopas and tried to please every body He realised real spiritual truth in his adolescence. This is all that he was prepared to admit as historical facts, and that too with a sense of great hesitation.

Before we take up for consideration his analysis of the character of Kṛṣṇa in the post-Vṛndāvana period it may

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18 *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa*, Chs. 15 ff. Hirendranath Datta pays Bankim high tributes for his excellent researches on Rādhā. He observes that Bankim was the first to controvert the theory of H. H. Wilson, who held that the *Brahma-vaivarta* was composed only some two to three years before his time (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, June, 1832). Bankim showed that contents of the fifteenth chapter of this *Purāṇa* must have been familiar to Jayadeva, ovtherwise he could not have alluded to the incident referred to in his introductory verse (*Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, Vol. 45, pp. 7-9).

be fruitful to quote the opinion of Sri Aurobindo on the methodology adopted by Bankim in his work. Sri Aurobindo observes : "He saw that in certain parts of the poem (*Mahābhārata*) Kṛṣṇa's godhead is either not presupposed at all or only slightly affirmed, while in others it is the main objective of the writer ; certain parts again give us a plain, unvarnished and straightforward biography and history, others are a mass of wonders and legends, often irrelevent extravagances ; in some parts also the conception of the chief characters is radically departed from and defaced. He, therefore, took these differences as his standard and accepted only those parts as genuine which give a plain and consistent account of Kṛṣṇa the man and of others in relation to him. Though his conclusions are to a great extent justifiable, his *a priori* method led him to exaggerate them, to enforce them too rigidly without the proper flexibility and scrupulous hesitation and to resort occasionally to special pleading."[19]

Bankimchandra held that there have been many interpolations in the *Mahābhārata* on account of three reasons. First, it was customary in ancient India to circulate books by oral recitation, even after the invention of writing. It was, therefore, easy to incorporate certain sections or verses in them. Secondly, the temptation for making interpolations became strong in the case of a highly popular book like the *Mahābhārata*. Thirdly, learned men in ancient India did not care much for literary renown ; all that they wanted was that people should derive benefit from reading their composition. They, therefore, introduced into the epic whatever they considered beneficial to the people. He laid down seven canons for the detection of

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19 Sri Aurobindo, *Vyāsa and Vālmiki*, pp. 64-65

interpolations.[20] First, that which is not mentioned in the *Parvasaṁgraha* must be later additions, though there have been some interpolations even before the composition of the chapter. V. S. Sukthankar says that the figures in the *Parvasaṁgraha* Chapter are prior to 1000 A.D., when the Javanese *Bhārata* and the Āndhra *Bhāratam* were composed; but the manuscripts collected for editing the critical edition contain many variants of the figures.[21] Secondly, that which is not referred to in the *Anukramaṇikā* Chapter must be an interpolation. Thirdly, if two contradictory statements are found at two different places one of them must be an interpolation. Fourthly, if the characteristic features of the composition of a great poet are found to be absent in some portions, those must be rejected. Rabindranath rightly observes that this is entirely a subjective test and that even a good poet might write occasionally some bad lines.[22] Fifthly, if some facts are narrated, which are contrary to the nature of the person concerned, these must be rejected as interpolation. He cited two imaginary instances. If anywhere it is found stated that Bhīṣma was attached to some body's wife or that Bhīma showed cowardice that must be an interpolation. Rabindranath states that this too is not a safe criterion because a great writer is not afraid of showing occasional inconsistency in the characters created by him, while the third-rate writers are always careful to make their heroes

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20 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, I. 10 (pp. 32-34).

21 Sukthankar observes: "It has been common experience that figures in ancient works, if at all complicated, seldom come out right, and the figures of the *Parvasaṁgraha* are probably no exception to this rule."

22. *Ādhunika Sāhitya*, *Kṛṣṇasandarbha*, in *Rabindra Racanāvali*, IX, p. 448-449 (Viśvabhārati ed.).

consistently good or persistently wicked.[23] Sixthly, that which is irrelevant may or may not be irrelevant, but if it comes under any of the five aforesaid tests it must be pronounced an interpolation. Seventhly, that which is supernatural or miraculous can not be accepted as a historical fact.[24]

Bankim classified the current version of the epic into three stages, the first being the original *Mahābhārata*, which was probably the *Bhārata-saṁhitā*, consisting of 24,000 verses. In the original stage Kṛṣṇa is not recognised usually as an incarnation and he himself never claims to be god. In the second stage he is regarded as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The composition too is not as liberal and poetic as the first part. In the third stage, episodes and didactic teachings have been incorporated for mass education by diverse writers. Bankim cites the major portion of the *Śānti* and *Anuśāsana parvas*, the *Gītā* portion of the *Bhīṣma-parva*, the chapters dealing with holy places in the *Vanaparva* as examples of the third stage.

Lassen had indicated three stages in the gorwth of the *Mahābhārata* more than a quarter of a century before Bankim. His first stage is the same as that of Bankim; but his second stage is identical with the *Itihāsa* mentioned in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* beginning with the history of King Vasu. The third section probably commenced with *Pauloma-adhyāya*.[25]

It must be said to the credit of Bankimchandra that he anticipated much of the method adopted by Jacobi, Hopkins and Ruben. More than half of a century before Ruben he compared the list of wives of Kṛṣṇa as found

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23 *Ibid.*, pp. 456-457.

24 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, I. 12 (pp. 36-39).

25 *Indische Alterthumskunde*, II. 499.

in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Harivaṁśa* and the *Mahābhārata*. But the conclusion he arrived at is quite different from that of Ruben. While the latter admitted that Kṛṣṇa had many wives, Bamkim could not do so, because he was trying to install the image of the national hero in the heart of Indians. That hero could never be a polygamist, having thousands of wives. He, therefore, had to reject the Naraka episode as myth, and to show that the writers of fiction had used their hands freely in interpolating passages in the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. He compiles a list of twenty-two wives of Kṛṣṇa from these three sources and says that as the last ten are found only in the *Harivaṁśa*, they can be excluded. The *Mauṣalaparvan* alone furnishes the names of Gāndhārī and Haimavatī, but the *Parvan* itself is an interpolation. He identifies Jāmbavatī with Rohiṇī and Satyā with Satyabhāmā. Thus only eight wives remain. He says that five of these, namely Śaivyā, Kālindī, Mitrabindā, Lakṣmaṇā and Mādrī are mere names; they never appear in the scene, and nothing is known as to how and when they were married. He conveniently omits here the name of the *Bhāgavata* from his authorities.[26] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes indeed the names of their sons but as they are never found taking any active part in any affair, they may be treated as mere products of imagination. Bankim, therefore, concludes that these five wives had no real existence in sober history. Then he takes up the question of feasibility of a human being like Kṛṣṇa marrying the daughter of a bear named Jāmbavatī. He considers it an utter impossibility, though in this instance her son Sāmba is known to have played a significant part in the destruction of the Yādava family.

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26 The *Bhāgavata* states how and when they were married and also who they were in X, 83.

Bankim consequently had to say that the *Mauṣalaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* itself was a late interpolation. He had some difficulty in this matter, because, according to him, the destruction of the Yādavas is the only matter which has been treated both in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*. We have seen in the fourth Chapter that many other events are deseribed both in the epic and in the *Purāṇas*. Having thus dismissed the claims of six of the principal ladies to be considered as wives of Kṛṣṇa, Bankim takes up the case of Satyabhāmā. She appears in the *Mahābhārata* in the *Mārkaṇḍeyasamasyā* problem and *Draupadī-Satyabhāmā saṁvāda, Yāna-Sandhiparvan* and in the *Mauṣalaparvan*. Bankim said that all these episodes are interpolations, and as such the very existence of Satyabhāmā is problematical. She figures prominently in connenction with the Syamantaka gem incident as related in the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*. But as it has got many super-natural features it is also treated as a fiction. But despite this array of arguments, Bankim could not be absolutely sure about the fictitous nature of Satyabhāmā. We find him making a long digression to the effect that under some special circumstances the taking of a second wife in the life time of the first might be permissible. Moreover, he cites many examples of polygamy from the *Mahābhārata* itself. He, however, sticks to his earlier conclusion that Kṛṣṇa had only one wife, and she was Rukmiṇī because her son and grandson alone figure in history and her great grandson Vajra became king.[27]

If Kṛṣṇa had only one wife, he could not have got one hundred and eighty thousand sons, as related in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[28] Bankim makes a little mathematical

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27 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, III. 7 (pp. 130-138).

28 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 32. 5. Though Bankim is usually very careful

calculation to show the absurdity of this number. He attributes to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* a statement to the effect that Kṛṣṇa's span of life in this world was one hundred and twenty-five years, though actually this information is given in the *Bhāgavata.*[29] He divided the total number of sons by 125 years × 365 days and comes to the conclusion that if this number were true 1440 sons per year and 4 sons per day had to be born to Kṛṣṇa. He, therefore, sarcastically observes that Kṛṣṇa's queens must be imagined to have conceived at the mere wish of Kṛṣṇa. Bankim, of course, could not believe the Purāṇic story that Kṛṣṇa assuming as many forms as there were queens lived with each one of them.[30] There is, however, a slight mistake in the calculation made by Bankim. Kṛṣṇa, in his human form, could not have produced a son during the first fourteen years of his life, nor after his eightieth year. This leaves only 66 years for procreative work, during which period on an average 7.5 sons had to be born a day if the Purāṇic total regarding the number of sons is to be believed at all.

The most important portion of the *Kṛṣṇacaritra* is the sixth book dealing with the part played by Kṛṣṇa in the Bhārata War. The *Mahābhārata* reveals Kṛṣṇa here as a crafty and cruel person, taking recourse to stratagems

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in quoting references, here we find him giving wrong references. He cites in p. 130, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 15 as his authority but the exact number of sons is not found there. In that particular chapter the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* quotes two ancient verses, as follows: "The domestic instructors of the boys in the use of arms amounted to three crores and eighty lacs. Who shall enumerate the whole of the mighty men of the Yādava race, who were tens of ten thousands and hundreds of hundred thousands in number ?"

29 *Bh.* XI. 5. 25.

30 *Bh.* X. 61-2.

considered as dishonourable in the epic age. These incidents are not described in the *Harivaṁśa* or the *Purāṇas*. There silence may be construed as their acquiescence to the description of the epic or more probably it signifies their unwillingness to remind the people of the ignoble and tortuous devices adopted by Kṛṣṇa in encompassing the death of Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa and Duryodhana. As there is no corroborative evidence of Kṛṣṇa's unjustifiable deeds in these events, one has to consider carefully the reliability of the portions of the *Mahābhārata* dealing with these. Bankimchandra has performed this task with considerable ability. He does not deny that Kṛṣṇa leapt down from the chariot on the third and the ninth day of the battle to kill Bhīṣma. He contends that there was no breach of promise on the part of Kṛṣṇa. He did this merely to incite Arjuna to action, and not really to wield war-like weapons in the battle. But Bankim treats the story of Śikhaṇḍin as a positive interpolation. Bankim analyses the episode relating to the killing of Jayadratha and shows that there was no need of making the day appear as evening on the part of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna was able to kili Jayadratha even without such a device. He, therefore, treats the trick of Kṛṣṇa as an interpolation, inserted in the second stage of the development of the epic. He is far more successful in showing that the unnerving of Droṇa by giving the false news of Aśvatthāmā's death is hardly credible. He adduces as many as seven arguments to prove that the whole episode of circulating the news of the elephant, called Aśvatthāmā, is the handiwork of a second rate poet. Bankim is less successful in justifying the the conduct of Kṛṣṇa in asking Arjuna to kill Karṇa immediately without giving him any opportunity for raising up his chariot from the mud. To Bankim Bhīma appears as a sort of demon, who does not require any hint regarding

the striking of his adversary with the mace below the navel. Thus he holds the story of Kṛṣṇa's beckoning to Arjuna the method of overpowering Duryodhana as an interpolation.[31]

Bankimchandra quotes in *extenso* the serious charges brought by Duryodhana against Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana addressed Kṛṣṇa as the son of the slave of Kaṁsa and said—"you should have been ashamed of inciting Arjuna to beckon to Bhīma about hittting me on the thigh. Thousands of kings engaged in the War have been killed by unfair means suggested by you. You have encompassed the death of the grandfather by placing Sikhaṇḍin in the front. When an elephant named Aśvatthāmā had died you had disarmed Droṇa by stratagem. You did not prevent Dhṛṣṭadyumna from killing Droṇa in your presence. You have by stratagem again, compelled Karṇa to use against Gkaṭotkaca the weapon which he had preserved for a long time for killing Arjuna". He also held Kṛṣṇa responsible for the discomfiture and death of Kaṁsa. Lastly he said, "If you had fought against Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa and myself in righteous way, you could never have gained victory. We are meeting death along with the kings devoted to *Dharma* because of the non-Aryan ways adopted by you."[32]

These verses occur in all the manuscripts and these have been accepted as genuine in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata.* But Bankim held them to be interpolations. He thought that all the incidents casting aspersions on the character of Kṛṣṇa were possibly inserted on account of sectarian animosity of the Śaivas and other sects hostile to Kṛṣṇa.[33]

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31 *Kṛṣṇacaritra,* VI, 8.
32 *Mbh.* IX. 60. 27—36.
33 *Kṛṣṇcaritra,* VI. 8 (p. 268).

Hopkins, too, considers these episodes as interpolations in another sense. He holds that these episodes were inseparable from the older heroic narrative and have therefore remained in the present form of the epic.[34] According to him about 400 B. C. the Bhārata lays were sung in honour of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas became the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* tale during the next two hundred years. Kṛṣṇa was then a demi-god. But between 200 B. C. and 100 or 200 A. D. Kṛṣṇa became the supreme God.[35] Bankimchandra would defend all the policies adopted and activities undertaken on the ground that the supreme need of establishing the kingdom based on righteousness demanded these. But he has overlooked the testimony of a Brāhmaṇa named Sāmba who said that Duryodhana did nothing wrong or harmful to his subjects.[36]

Bankimchandra concludes his brilliant work with the observation that Kṛṣṇa was an ideal person in whom the

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34 Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*, p. 375. Hopkins writes: "Is it conceivable that any priest, setting out to write a moral tale which should inculcate virtue, would first make one of the heroes do an ignoble thing, and then have both their great god and their chief human exponent of morality combine in applauding what was openly acknowledged even by the gods to be dishonourable conduct? Even if the act was dramatically permitted for the purpose of setting its condemnation in a stronger light and thus purging in the end, can we imagine that the only indicator of virtue should be Rāma and that Kṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira of all others should cut so contemptible a figure? On the other hand, is not the whole scene explicable without any far-fetched hypothesis, if we assume that we have here mingling of older incident, inseparable from the heroic narrative, and the latter teaching administered by a moral *deus ex machina*? As the scene stands it is grotesque."

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

36 *Mbh*, XV. 15. 16 ff.

synthetic development of all the mental and physical faculties took place simultaneously. He was not merely a great hero, but according to the testimony of Bhīṣma, a scholar well versed in all the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas*. Bankim proved that Kṛṣṇa was the "wisest and greatest of the Hindus." But Rabindranath offers a perfectly valid criticism against the *Kṛṣṇacaritra* when he says that the hero of the work is not really Kṛṣṇa but the rationalism of Bankimchandra.[37] To Bankim the real scripture is that which can be rationally believed and that which cannot be so believed is no scripture at all.

Bankimchandra had to carry on his researches on Kṛṣṇa under serious handicaps. Manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata*, written in the Śāradā, Nāgarī, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu and other scripts had not been collected at one centre and as such no body was in a position to adduce objective proof regarding the authenticity or otherwise of any portion of the work. Scholars, both eastern and western, had to depend on their own intellect and inclinations in drawing conclusions regarding interpolations. Then again, the scientific study of the *Purāṇas* had not yet begun. All the religious reformers from Rammohan Roy to Dayananda Sarasvati had condemned the *Purāṇas* as products of a degenerate age. Bankim, however, showed that though the *Bhāgavata* is not historically important yet in the exposition of spiritual matter it is unrivalled.[38] Bankim was a close student of positivism expounded by Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Applying the rationalistic tests Bankim showed that the *Mahābhārata* is a historical work, though accretions had taken place in it from time to time. If it is contended

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37 *Rabindra Racanāvali*, IX. 447.

38 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, II. 7 (p. 92).

that the inclusion of some supernatural stories in it goes against its claim to be regarded as History, Bankim pointed out that the works of Herodotus, Livy and Ferishta suffer from the same defect, and are yet regarded as authoritative historical books.[39] He, however, admitted that those portions of the epic which ascribe godhood to Kṛṣṇa were later additions. He emphatically stated that personally he was a believer in the divinity of Kṛṣṇa. But as a man Kṛṣṇa did not take recourse to supernatural powers for accomplishing his objects. Hirendranath Datta, a great admirer of Bankimchandra, held a contary view in this regard.[40] The most important contribution made by Bankimchandra to Indology is that while the western scholars of the last century held Kṛṣṇa as a myth or an allegorical figure, Bankimchandra stoutly maintained that he was really a historical personage.[41]

While Bankimchandra (1838-1894) dismissed many of the events described in the Epic and the *Purāṇas* as mere myths, his younger contemporary, Navinachandra Sen (1847-1909) played the part of a myth-maker in course of interpreting the life of Kṛṣṇa in his triology of epical poems—*Raivataka* (1887), *Kurukṣetra* (1893) and *Prabhāsa* (1896). Both Bankim and Navina were Government servants, but both were inspired by the ideal of Nationalism. Like Bankim, Navina was more or less a rationalist. He refused to believe that Kuntī could attract the Sun to come down to the earth and impregnate her. The *Mahābhārata* says that Kuntī got the *Mantra* from Durvāsā, enabling her to attract the Sun.[42] Navina says that it implied that the sage himself

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39 *Ibid.*, I, 3 (p. 7).

40 *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, Vol. 45, p. 95 and *Avatāratattva* by Hirendranath Datta.

41 *Pracāra*, a Bengali monthly journal, 1292 *Āṣāḍha* (1885 July).

42 *Mbh.* I. 104. 4-11.

corrupted the youthful maiden engaged by her foster-father to wait on her.[43] Navina came in contact with the celebrated Brahmo reformer Keśavacandra in his student-life. He must have received his bias against the caste system from the latter.

Keśavacandra's writings on Kṛṣṇa as a national hero of India influenced the young poet to interpret Kṛṣṇa's life in that light.[44] Gaurgovinda Roy, a favourite disciple of Keśavacandra, published several discourses on the mission of Kṛṣṇa in 1876 in a journal named *Dharmatattva* and elaborated his thesis in the form of a book in 1889. This also must have had its influence in shaping the views of Navinachandra. There has been much controversy with regard to Bankim's influence on the plan behind the triology of Navina. When the *Raivaṭaka* was published many critics said that it was an echo of the *Kṛṣṇacaritra*. But Navina produced the letter written by Bankim to him on the 10th January, 1880 to show that he had conceived the plan earlier and submitted it along with the first three cantos of his poem to the doyen of Bengali literature. In the letter Bankim said that Navina had planned an exceedingly ambitious project, the most ambitious since the days of the *Harivaṁśa* and *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*.[45] But the influence of Bankim is undeniable on the 13th canto of the *Kurukṣetra* where Subhadrā explains that the mission of human life is to develop the physical, mental and spiritual faculties.

The plan of the triology is to depict Kṛṣṇa as a national hero who conceived the plan of forging the unity of India in

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43 *Kurukṣetra*, X (p. 48).

44 Keśava's articles in the *Sunday Mirror*, 10th and 24th Dec. 1876, 14th Aug. 1886, and in the *New Dispensation* dated the 9th June, 22nd July, 1881 and 23rd Sept. 1883.

45 Navinachandra Sen, *Raivataka*, *Kurukṣetra*, *Prabhāsa* (Bookland) edited by Dr. Asit Kumar Banerjee, Intro. (p. 24).

his adolescent age at Vṛndāvana.[46] The Brāhmaṇas came to regard Kṛṣṇa, according to Navina, as a revolutionary, bent upon transforming the Indian empire, society and religion.[47] The background of the triology is furnished by the conflict between the ruling Aryans and the resurgent non-Aryans under the leadership of Vāsuki. Kṛṣṇa is said to have studied the scriptures and received military training from Garga secretly at Vṛndāvana while he was apparently engaged in tending the cows.[48] Navina gives a novel interpretation of the holding of Govardhana. He says that Kṛṣṇa asked the cowherds not to worship the inanimate clouds, represented as Indra, and urged them to distribute the offerings of food to the Brāhmaṇas and the untouchable *Caṇḍālas* equally. This incensed the Brāhmaṇas, who surrounded the Govardhana like a host of dark clouds and shot arrows incessantly like rains at Kṛṣṇa and his followers for seven days. But Kṛṣṇa valiantly defended Govardhana and hoisted the flag of his new religion on the top of the mountain.[49] The *Rāsalīlā*, which Navina describes, is not an erotic dance of young people, but a *Saṅkīrtana* performance in which men, women, children and old people took part. Finding Kṛṣṇa absent from home even after midnight Yaśodā came to the bank of the Yamunā in search of her son. When she discovered Kṛṣṇa she too began to dance with joy along with others and sang his achievements.[50]

In this new orientation of the life of Kṛṣṇa, Navina made his hero to form a secret alliance with the non-Aryan

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46 *Kurukṣetra*, IX (p. 39).
47 *Raivataka*, XVII (p. 108), XII (p. 77).
48 *Ibid.*, VII (p. 42).
49 *Ibid.*, VII (p. 46).
50 *Ibid.*, VII (p. 47).

Nāgas. Kṛṣṇa is alleged to have gone to the city of the Nāgas in Sind from Vṛndāvana for one year with a view to recruiting soldiers there. Jaratkāru, the sister of Vāsuki, fell deeply in love with Kṛṣṇa, who, however, could not reciprocate as he had taken the vow of re-organising Indian life and society.[51] Jaratkāru, therefore, took a vow to wreck her vengeance on Kṛṣṇa. Towards the end of the third poem, *Prabhāsa*, we find her killing Kṛṣṇa by shooting an arrow at Him. Kṛṣṇa, however, forgave her and before his death took her on his breast.[52] Kṛṣṇa went back to Vṛndāvana and while he was engaged in the so called *Rāsa* dance in the form of *Saṅkīrtana*, ten thousand Nāga soldiers, in the guise of cowherds, came to join him. He went to Mathurā in their company as a party of milkmen with their wares, overpowered the soldiers of Kaṁsa and then killed the latter in a duel. Vāsuki now demanded the hands of Subhadrā in marriage as a recompense for the services he had rendered to Kṛṣṇa. The latter said that she was too young to be married. Vāsuki, thereupon, resolved to have her by some other means. He joined the party of Durvāsas, who was in search of allies for teaching a lesson to Kṛṣṇa, who had dared to raise his voice against the domination of the Brāhmaṇas. The greater portion of the poem *Raivataka* is devoted to the narration of the love-marriage between Arjuna and Subhadrā. When the poem was published Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya, another eminent poet, wrote that it would have been better to call the poem *Subhadrā-haraṇa* rather than *Raivataka*. At this Navina expressed his sense of disappointment because educated persons too failed to realise the importance of the mission he had undertaken.

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51 *Ibid.*, VIII(pp. 54-57).

52 *Prabhāsa*, IX (p. 44).

Many works indeed have been written on the theme of the marriage of Subhadrā with Arjuna like *Subhadrā-Dhanañjaya* by the Kerala Prince Kulaśekhara Varman of the 12th century, *Subhadrā-haraṇa* by Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, probably of the 14th century, *Subhadrā-pariṇaya* of Rāmdeva Vyāsa in the 15th century and *Bhadrārjuna Kāvya* by Taracharana Shikdar in 1852, but none of them had such an intricate political background as Navinachandra's *Raivataka*. Bankim on going through the manuscript of the first three cantos of the *Raivataka*, had warned Navina against his tendency of going against historical facts. He had written on the January 10, 1880: "I have advised you to keep clear of history; but I can not advise you to run counter to history. Even this you may do so far as individual characters are concerned, but I am hardly bold enough to advise you to do so, in the case of large national movements. Now I believe that it is not historically true either that Kṛṣṇa set himself against Brahmanical authority (there was never a great champion of it) or that the Brāhmaṇas ever coalesced with the non-Aryans in order to put down the Kṣatriyas."[53] The advice was a sound one, but Navina refused to accept it. In this connection we must note that Bankim himself did not believe that Kṛṣṇa washed the feet of the Brāhmaṇas at the *Rājasūya* ceremony. He treated the *Mahābhārata* episode as an interpolation.[54]

Navinachandra has depicted Kṛṣṇa as a disciple of Vyāsa in his poem, *Kurukṣetra*. Kṛṣṇa is painted here as very much grieved at the lack of unity in India. In the political field there were many kingdoms, in the social atmosphere too many divisions into castes and in the

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53 Asit Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

54 *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, IV. 9 (p. 182).

religious sphere too much attachment to warring creeds, specially in meaningless sacrificial rites.[55] He dedicated his life to the sacred task of bringing unity in all these spheres. Navinachandra has presented Subhadrā in the garb of Florence Nightingale, moving from camp to camp in the battle field nursing the sick and the wounded.[56] Both Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā are described as apostles of universal love and international peace.[57]

The *Prabhāsa*, the last of the triology, narrates the destruction of the Yādava clans. This was a necessary corollary to the sacred mission of Kṛṣṇa. The Yādavas had been engrossed in luxury and vice. The poet states that though Kṛṣṇa was not able to reform the character of his own clansmen, yet the non-Aryans had all embraced his religion of love. Vāsuki could not engage them against Kṛṣṇa despite all the efforts of Durvāsas. Vāsuki himself became a Vaiṣṇava, but his sister Jaratkāru remained hostile. She encouraged the drinking habit amongst the Yādavas and cleverly incited Sātyaki to murder Kṛtavarmā. When practically all the Yādavas killed one another, Kṛṣṇa asked his elder brother Balarāma to sail with a contingent of the non-Aryan soldiers to the west and preach the religion of love there. He predicted that Harikula, the family of Hari and its lord Harikuleśa would be worshipped in the whole world.[58] Vyāsa consoled Arjuna with the prediction that a new incarnation

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55 *Ibid.*, IX (pp. 39-41).

56 *Ilid.*, III (p. 9).

57 *Ibid.*, XII (p. 58).

58 *Prabhāsa*, VIII (p. 40). Navinachandra quotes in the appendix to the poem the following passage from Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Ch II) "Arrian notices the similarity of the Theban and the Hindu Hercules and cites as authority the ambassador of Seleucus, Megasthenes, who says : 'He uses the same habit with the Theban and is particularly worshipped by the Saraseni, who have two great cities

would be born in the new Yadu family in the North-east of the Red sea, meaning thereby Jesus Christ. None can surpass Navinachandra in the boldness of conception and in the ingenuity of interpretation. He began his first poem as a rationalist who pronounced some episodes of Kṛṣṇa's *Vṛndāvanalīlā* as false, but ended the second poem with a prayer that he might die while hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa. The third poem reveals him as a regular Vaiṣṇava of the Bengal school, believing in the re-birth of Kṛṣṇa as Gaurahari or Caitanya.[59]

The interpretation of the life of Kṛṣṇa in a rationalistic fashion produced little effect on social and cultural life of Bengal. Premananda Bharati, a Vaiṣṇava Sannyasin of Bengal, went to America at the beginning of the present century. He got a pamphlet and a book in two volumes published in New York in 1904 on Kṛṣṇa. The pamphlet exhorted the audience to concentrate upon Kṛṣṇa "that greatest of incarnations, who was all love, the very source of love, the greatest human manifestation of love, before whom every one and every thing bowed, such was the might of his love."[60] The first part of his book entitled *Sree Kṛṣṇa* has got 24 Chapters, of which the last one only deals with the life of his hero.[61] The second part narrates the life of Kṛṣṇa

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belonging to them, namely Methoras (Mathura) and Clisoboras'. Diodorus has the same legend with some variety. He says: 'Hercules was born among the Indians' .. (Hari-cul-es)=lord of the race (cula) of Hari, of which the Greeks might have made the compound Hercules. Might not a colony after the great war have migrated westward? The period of the return of the Heraclidae, the descendants of Atreas (Atri is progenitor of Haricula) would answer: it was about half a century after the great war."

59 *Ibid.*, XIII (p. 66).

60 *American Lectures delivered by Baba Premananda Bharati* (Printed in the Indo-American Press, 1904), p. 12.

61 *Sree Krishna* (New York, 1904), pp. 295-309.

at Vṛndāvana only. The author is in raptures while speaking of Rādhā: "Rādhā was she, youthful, lovely, she His playmate of the forest, she, with love-look in her face, she the queen of Love among them, giving all and asking naught."[63] He made considerable impression on the American society. In February 1909 he came back to India with four ladies and one American gentleman, of whom two were graduates and with them he sang Kṛṣṇa songs in Bengali.

Another forceful interpretor of Kṛṣṇa's life and religion was Bipinchandra Pal, who like Bijoykrisna Goswami was a Brahmo in his early life but became a Vaiṣṇava in his mature age. A collection of his thirteen letters, written in the form of lectures, was published under the title *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa*, by Tagore & Co., Madras. The incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa are not discussed here; only the significance of his teachings and the bearing of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy are explained. But in Prefatory remarks he calls Kṛṣṇa the Soul of India and elaborates the idea in the following words: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa represents the ideal of the Indian type of Humanity. Historically, he has been the supreme teacher of our people. He has given us the highest philosophy of both our individual and our composite social life. In his life and teachings India has found the master-key to the secrets of her nation-building, and a rational synthesis of all the outer differences and conflicts of her diverse races and communities and the confusions of her numerous cults, cultures, religions and philosophies."[64] This appears to be an echo of the theme for Navinachandra. The influence of the poet becomes more distinct when Bipinchandra observes: "Finally Śrī Kṛṣṇa as we find him in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṁśa*, stands

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63 *Ibid.*, Ch. XXV.

64 Bipin Chandra Pal, *Śri-Kṛṣṇa*, pp. 7-8.

out as the first and greatest Nation-builder in India. He sought to reconstruct the ancient Aryan society of India upon a broad federal basis, making room within it for the various non-Aryan races and communites of the land thus laying the foundations of Indian unity and nationality upon a stupendous social synthesis, reconciling the independence and individuality of the different races and communities with the unity of the new composite Social National whole."[65] The Epic and the *Purāṇas*, however, do not supply any clue to such a magnificient theory. Some of the poets and philosophers of modern India were really creating a myth of Kṛṣṇa as the nation-builder. Bipinchandra Pal was primarily a philosopher and not a diligent student of History. He described Kṛṣṇa as the son of Ghora Āṅgirasa.[66] He depended almost exclusively on the *Bhāgavata* and the *Sandarbhas* written by Jīvagosvāmin.

Another devout interpretor of Kṛṣṇa's life and teaching was T. L. Vaswani, who held the post of the Principal in a college in Sind. Like Bipinchandra he was as much concerned with the political significance of Kṛṣṇa's life as with the grace and charm of his Vṛndāvana *līlā*. Addressing the audience he said : "Kṛṣṇa wants you for the service of India ; He wants you to make her free." He interpreted the life of Kṛṣṇa as a statesman and as the king[67] though the Epic and the *Purāṇas* do not say that he ever became a king.

Bhagavan Das delivered a lecture on Kṛṣṇa at Allahabad on 18th August, 1919 and developed it in the form of a book five years later. His thesis is that Kṛṣṇa combined in himself all the three functions—Thought, Emotion and

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65 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
66 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
67 T. L. Vaswani, *Sri Krisna, the Saviour of Humanity*, pp. 19, 37.

Action in an extra-ordinary degree.[68] He first shows Kṛṣṇa as Man of action, History-maker and Righter of wrongs ;[69] then explains his role as man of emotion and inspirer of devotion ;[70] the superphysical powers of Kṛṣṇa are analysed next[71] and last of all Kṛṣṇa is held up as a Man of knowledge and teacher.[72] He does not refer to Bankim's *Kṛṣṇacaritra* as one of the 95 authorities cited by him. But any one acquainted with Bankim's work can see that he is elucidating the conclusions of *Kṛṣṇacaritra* in which Kṛṣṇa's faculties have been divided as *Kārya-kāriṇī* (action), *Jñān-ārjanī* (acquisition of knowledge) and *Citta-rañjinī* (aesthetic and emtional). Bankim has tried to prove in his *Kṛṣṇacaritra, Dharma-tattva* and the *Gītā* that there was a harmonious development of all the three faculties in Kṛṣṇa. But Bhagavan Das has evinced his originality in interpreting the life of Kṛṣṇa. Bankim had tried to prove that Kṛṣṇa had only one wife ; Navina said he had two, of whom Satyabhāmā was the elder, but Bhagavan Das concedes that Kṛṣṇa had eight wives, for each of whom he built a separate palace.[73] Contray to the evidence of the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*, Bhagavan Das says that Samvara entrusted his daughter and not wife with the care of Pradyumna who had been stolen away from Dvārakā.[74] The author shows remakable ingenuity in

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68 Bhagavan Das, *Krisna* (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras), pp. 36-45.

69 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-63.

70 *Ibid.*, pp. 64-97.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 126.

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 127-196.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 76. He quotes the authority of the *Mbh.* 11. 57 as his authority for the statement regarding the palaces. But neither the Critical edition nor the Calcutta edition of the *Mbh.* contains such a description,

74 In the *Harivaṁśa* (II. 104, 6) Samvara's wife is named Māyāvati.

explaining the mission of Kṛṣṇa's life in the following words: "Knowing the Kurukṣetra had not completed all his work, Kṛṣṇa finished it at Prabhāsa-kṣetra, on the shores of the sea of Dvārakā, when his immediate kith and kin slaughtered each other to the number of half a million, as said in the *Mahābhārata*, drank with alcohol and even more drunk with the arrogance of militarism. In this way he broke the last great and dangerous military power of his day and gave to the peaceful agriculturist and tradesman a chance." He quotes three verses from the *Bhāgavata* (XI. 1. 2-4) in support of his contention but the *Purāṇa* is absolutely silent about Kṛṣṇa's giving a chance to the Vaiśyas. The writer has been probably misled by class interest.

The process of creating myths and legends on Kṛṣṇa has not yet come to an end. The gifted scholar and novelist Dr. K. M. Munshi is probably the latest to join the rank of myth-makers. In his brilliant work, *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*, he states: "All authorities agree that one of the ancestors of Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas was a Nāga princess. Śūra, the Yādava chief, was married to the daughter of the Nāga king, Āryaka, variously named Bhoja, Bhāṣī or Marīṣā. By her Śūra had ten sons of whom Vasudeva, the father of Kṛṣṇa, was the eldest, and Devabhaga, father of Uddhava the next, and five daughters of whom Pṛthā or Kuntī was the eldest and Śrutaśravā, the queen of Cedi, and mother of Śiśupāla, the fourth daughter."[75] Dr. Munshi cites three authorities, namely, *Mbh.* I. 128. 64, *Harivaṁśa* I. 34 and *Bhāgavata* IX. 24. Had he cared to consult the Critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, he

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She rears up Pradyumna and then falls in love with him. In the *Bh.* (X. 55) and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (V. 27) also the same story is told. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* (IV. 112) repeats the same story with erotic details.

75 K. M. Munshi, *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*, II. P. 428.

would have found that his first reference has been discarded as an interpolation.[76] The *Harivaṁśa* is silent about Āryaka the serpent King.[77] The *Bhāgavata* merely records that the name of the wife of Śūra was Marīṣā. So the great edifice of Aryan-non-Aryan matrimonial alliance crumbles down. It is also curious that a non-Aryan Nāga chief should bear the name of Āryaka, which literally means a diminutive form of Ārya.

The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* is the only authority to state that Rādhā was older than Kṛṣṇa—much older than what Dr. Munshi makes her to be. According to the above *Purāṇa* when Kṛṣṇa was an infant she was a young woman. But Dr. Munshi makes her a girl of twelve while Kṛṇṣa was seven years old. She proposed one day, according to his version of the legend, that she and Kṛṣṇa should secretly bathe together in the Yamunā. Kṛṣṇa agreed after some hesitation. Another day Rādhā swang Kṛṣṇa, and the latter swang Rādhā who sang :

"Thou didst smile and come to live in my eyes,
And I became thy bond-slave for ever and for ever,
My Kāhna, my Kāhna."[78]

This is a charming lyric and a valuable addition to the lore of Vaiṣṇava poems, but nothing else. In another passage Munshi makes Uddhava a playmate and adviser of Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana.[79] No *Purāṇa* would agree with him. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were the only two Yādavas at Vṛndāvana.

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76 *Mbh.* I. p. 916, which states that the passage stating the fact that Bhima has been called the grandson of the grandson of Aryaka on the daughters's side is found only in 4 Mss.. viz, K^4, N. B. D. (as Numbered in B. O. R. I. ed.).

77 The *Hv.* 34. 17 states that Śūra procreated ten sons on Bhojyā.

78 K. M. Munshi, *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*, I, p. 113.

79 *Ibid.*, I, p. 120.

In 1905 C. V. Vaidya brought out some important points regarding the development of the Vaiṣṇavism in his work, *The Mahābhārata, a Criticism.* He points out that certain statements in the present *Mahābhārata* are to be regarded as invaluable fossils, which are preserved in this vast work by mistake or accident, and that these gave evidence of the fact that the original work of Vyāsa was considerably different from its present form. He cites two instances. In the *Mauṣalaparvan* it is related that some of the wives of Kṛṣṇa went away with the attacking barbarians of their own choice. Vaidya comments : "Had the author been thoroughly Vaiṣṇavite, he would not have represented some of Kṛṣṇa's wives or rather women as eloping with the barbarians, although it is but natural to expect, where a man keeps an unwieldy harem, some of the women to be dissatisfied and in a mood to elope."[80] This sort of argument would have horrified even a rationalist like Bankimchandra, who treated the whole episode, as an interpolation. The second instance is quoted from the *Gadā-parvan,* where Duryodhana charged Kṛṣṇa with taking recourse to dishonourable means. The epic states : "The gods showered flowers on the dying man in approbation and all those present felt abashed". C. V. Vaidya observes that this is a positive proof of the fact that the original Vyāsa did not always side with Kṛṣṇa but expressed his sentiments without bias.[81] He further shows that at one stage of the development of the epic Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were regarded as partial incarnations. It is related that Nārāyaṇa tore off two hairs, one white and the other black, from his body, and this caused the birth of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.[82] But in other

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80 C. V. Vaidya, *The Mahābhārata. a Criticism,* pp. 38-39.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

82 *Ibid.*. p 42.

portions of the *Mahābhārata*, especially in the speeches of Bhīṣma, Kṛṣṇa is depicted as Supreme Being. In this connection it may be mentioned that Śrīdharasvāmin in his commentary on the *Bhāgavata*, arguing like a rationalist, says that only an old man could have got a white hair; Nārāyaṇa could never grow old.[83] By speaking of the hair, says Śrīdhara, it is singnified that the burden of the world can be lightened even by a hair of God, it does not necessitate the appearance of his own self. Jīvagosvāmin quotes Hemādri's commentary on the Muktāphala where the word *Keśa* has been interpreted as *K* (*Sukha*) + *Iśa* (master) that is master of happiness.[84]

In 1920 Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri in his *Early History of the Vaishnava Sect* reminded historians that in writing about Kṛṣṇa most writers "began at the wrong end with the late epic and *Purāṇic* legends insted of at the right end with the early *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*."[85] He made a valuable contribution by identifying the Kṛṣṇa of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* with the epic Kṛṣṇa and by showing the identity of the teachings of the *Gītā* with those contained in the conversation between Ghora Āṅgirasa and Kṛṣṇa. He, however, considered Kṛṣṇa as the disciple of Ghora Āṅgirasa though it was Śaṅkarācārya who imputed this relationship more than 1500 years after the composition of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. According to Dr. Raychaudhuri "To reconstruct a life of the teacher (Kṛṣṇa) on the evidence of the *Harivaṁśa* or the *Purāṇas* which in their present shape are separated by an interval of many centuries from his time, will be building castles on a morass."[86]

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83 Śridhara's commentary on *Bh.* II. 7, 26.
84 Jiva gosvāmin, *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha*, Section 29 (p. 62).
85 H. C. Raychaudhuri, *The Early History of the Vaishnava Sect*, p. 39.
86 *Ibid* , p. 71.

But some scholars have carried their scepticism so far that their theories also look like castles built on the morass of slenderest evidence. One historian insinuates on the basis of a drawing of discus in a Mirzapur cave assignable probably to 800 B. C. that Kṣṛṇa was originally an aborigin but by the time of the aforesaid drawings he was taken on the side of the angels. He finds support of his theory from Pāṇini's *sūtra*, 4.3. 98, which according to him, meant that at the time of Pāṇini neither Kṛṣṇa nor Arjuna were counted as Kṣatriyas.[87] He holds that the *Gītā* must be regarded as an interpolation because Kṛṣṇa as he appears in the *Mahābhārata*, is singularly ill-suited to propound any really moral doctrine. To him Bhīṣma appears to be eminently fitted to teach rectitude, but not Kṛṣṇa. He explains : "At every single crisis of the war, his advice wins the day by the crookedest of means which could never have occurred to the others. To kill Bhīṣma, Śikhaṇḍin was used as a living shield against whom that perfect knight would not raise a weapon, because of doubtful sex. Droṇa was polished off while stunned by the deliberate false report of his son's death. Karṇa was shot down against all rules of chivalry when dismounted and unarmed ; Duryodhana was bludgeoned to death after a foul mace blow that shattered his thigh. This is by no means the complete list of iniquities. When taxed with these transgressions, Kṛṣṇa replies bluntly at the end of the *Śalyaparvan* that the man could not have been killed in any other way, that victory could never have been won otherwise. The calculated treachery of the

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87 D. D Kosambi, *Myth and Reality* (Bombay 1962), p. 26. Patañjali in the middle of the second century B. C. in commenting on *Pāṇini* IV. 3. 98 states that Vāsudeva is the name of the Bhagavat, and not of a Kṣatriya hero J. Kennedy anticipated Kosambi when he wrote that Kṛṣṇa was a semi-aboriginal deity (*J. R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 506).

Arthaśāstra saturates the action of this divine exponent of the *Bhagavadgītā.*"[88]

Hostility to Kṛṣṇa is as old as Śiśupāla. The old Jaina legend of the *Antagaḍadasāo* sends Kṛṣṇa to hell. In it we find Kānha asking the saint Ariṭṭhanemi, who had married Kaṁsa's sister, as to where he would go after his death and the latter replied : 'thou shalt be reborn as a hell-dweller in a flaming hell in the third earth'.[89] J. Kennedy comments that this is the fate which the hero of the *Mahābhārata* richly deserved.[90] It is strange that some modern scholars try to show their originality by repeating the exploded theories put forward by Christian missionaries. The place of the *Gītā* in the *Mahābhārata* and its relation to the teachings of Kṛṣṇa are discussed in the Appendix.

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88 *Myth and Reality*, p. 19.
89 Barnett, *Antagaḍadasāo*, O.T.F., Vol. XVIII, p. 81,
90 *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 510.

APPENDIX—IV

DID KṚṢṆA BELONG TO THE PRE-ARYAN OR NON-ARYAN STOCK ?

More than half-a-century ago it was a fashion among a certain section of Indologists to dub both Kṛṣṇa and Vaiṣṇavism as foreign imports. The old order has changed, yielding place to new ; and some of the scholars belonging to the present generation now take delight in calling Kṛṣṇa as one of the aboriginal or a member of the non-Aryan races. If the Śvetadvīpa or white island described in the *Nārayaṇīya* section of the *Śāntiparvan* was taken as an evidence of the foreign influence on Vaiṣṇavism, emphasis is now laid on the name of Kṛṣṇa, which implies black colour. The Indo-Aryans are supposed to have been white in colour and that they are said to have nothing but contempt and hatred for the black people. These scholars conveniently forget that modern Anthropology has proved racial purity in any section of the population of the world as a myth. Long ago Ramaprasad Chanda adduced some proof to show that the Aryans passed through Syria and Mesopotamia absorbing a good deal of Semitic blood before they reached India.[1] Another scholar has come to the conclusion that the people who came to India were obliged to pass through the regions already inhabited by tribes related to the Mediterranean people, and perhaps also by tribes akin to the Dravidians and that they appear anthropologically to have been brown *dolichocephalous*.[2]

Curiously enough Alberuni, on the authority of *Viṣṇu-Dharma*, states that the colour of Hari is white in the

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1 R. P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 33.

2 Calcutta University Anthropological Paper, No. 6, pp. 32-34.

Kṛtayuga, red in the Tretā, yellow in the Dvāpara and black in the Kali age.[3] It is useless to lay too much emphasis on colour. Keith has rightly observed: "There is still doubt whether the Indo-Europeans were Nordic blonds or Mediterranean brunettes or Alpine *brachycephals* or a mixed race."[4] There is no clear indication in the Vedic literature to show that the Aryans were white in colour. *RV.* I. 100. 18 says that the Maruts were the friends of Indra in his fight against the Dasyus and that having killed the enemies he divided the fields with his white-complexioned friends. The white colour of the friends of Indra has been taken by modern European scholars to be the colour of the Aryans without any justification. Another passage cited by scholars to prove the white colour of the Aryans is *RV.* III. 34. 9 "*hatvā Dasyum prāryam varṇam āvat*", i. e. having killed the Dasyus, (Indra) protected well the Varṇa of the Āryas. Did the Aryans face the danger of intermixture of blood from the non-Aryans on a mass scale? Is it not too much to read the racial problem of modern America in the Vedic passage? Another hymn, *RV.* II. 12. 4 refers to Indra as "chasing away the *Dāsam Varṇam.*" But this does not indicate that the Dāsas were black in colour.[5]

The name Kṛṣṇa is not at all uncommon in the Vedic literature. The composer of the hymn *RV.* VIII. 85. 3. was one Kṛṣṇa. Other hymns, I. 116. 23 and 117. 17 are associated with the name Kṛṣṇīya which is probably a patronymic word. Kṛṣṇa Hārīta is mentioned as a teacher

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3 *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 398-399.

4 Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads*, Vol. I, Ch. 1.

5 I am greatful to my friend Dr. Tarapada Bhattacharyya, for allowing me to draw upon his unpublished paper, entitled "The Non-Aryans and the Ṛgveda."

in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, III. 2-6 and in the *Śāṅkhyāyana Āraṇyaka*, VIII. 10. In the list of teachers, given in the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad* we find such names as Kṛṣṇa-datta, Lauhitya, Kṛṣṇa-dhṛti Sātyaki and Kṛṣṇa-rāta Lauhitya. If the Vedic Aryan had been really abhorrent of the black colour or had the mere word Kṛṣṇa singnified non-Aryan origin so many of the Vedic sages would not have borne that name. In this connection it should be borne in mind that Rāmacandra is always described like Kṛṣṇa as having a colour similar to *nava-durvā-dala-śyāma*, dark-grey like the new blades of grass.

Some scholars assert that the association of Kṛṣṇa with the nomadic Ābhīras in his early life is an indication of either his foreign origin or his aboriginal descent. This type of argument contains a number of fallacies. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* nowhere assert that Kṛṣṇa spent his boyhood in the company of Ābhīras. These authorities always use the term Gopa for the the friends and relatives of child Kṛṣṇa.[6] The word Gopāla occurs in the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXXII. 11 and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* II. 1, 5,4. No one would contend that the Vedic Aryans were ignorant of cow-keeping or that they did not drink milk. The term *Abhīra* is ethnic in connotation, while the word *Gopa* denotes a profession or occupation. The Gopas among whom Kṛṣṇa was reared up were originally a pastoral people indeed. Thus Kṛṣṇa tells the Gopas in the *Harivaṁśa* : "We are cowherds, wandering in forests, maintaining ourselves on cows, which are our wealth ; cows are our deities, and mountains and forests."[7] The *Bhāgavata*[8] and the *Viṣṇu*

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6 In the sixteenth century Rūpa Gosvāmin in his *Kṛṣṇaganoddeśa Dipikā* (9) and Kavi Karṇapura in his *Ānanda Vṛndāvana campū* (7. 126) speak of the Ābhiras as Gopas.

7 *Harivaṁśa*, II, 16.2.

8 *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, X. 24. 24.

Purāṇa[9] also state that the Gopas had no fixed abode and no village or town ; nor had they any house with doors and walls. R. G. Bhandarkar argues that as the Ābhīras enjoyed high political position about the end of the second century and in the third, they must have migrated into the country in the first century, and that they brought with them stories of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood, such as that of killing Dhenuka, a demon in the form of an ass.[10] But he overlooks three points. First, that Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* (1. 2. 3.) speaks of the Ābhīra-Sūdras in the second century B. C. Had they migrated from a foreign country in the first century B. C., or even in the third century B. C., their name would not have been used as a well-known term by Patañjali. A foreign tribe could not have found a place in the Hindu social heirarchy within half a century or so. Secondly, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* describes the Ābhīras as a fierce-looking people (*Ugradarśana*) and as untouchables, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (V. 10.27-28) and the *Bhāgavāta* (X. 24. 21.) describe the Gopas as Vaiśyas and as comely in appearence. Thirdly, the Ābhīra tribe id not settle in the Mathurā region. Abiria or the Ābhīra country is located in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* and and also in the *Geography* of Ptolemy in the region between the lower Sindhu valley and Kathiawar, in south-western Rajputana and the adjoining regions. The *Viṣṇu Purōṇa* and *Bṛhat Saṁhita* place the Ābhīras near the Aparānta (Koṅkan) and Saurāṣṭra. According to the *Purāṇas* they succeeded the Sātavāhanas and ruled for 67 years in the north-west region of the Deccan. Dr. D. C. Sircar states that these dominions may have sometimes included the northern Koṅkan as far as the Broach area of the north ; there is not a single iota of evidence to show that

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9 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V. 10.33.

10 *Vaishnavism, Saivism etc.*, pp. 52-53.

the Ābhīras ever occupied or even resided in the Mathurā region. The Nasik inscription of the Ābhīra king Māṭharīputra Īśvarasena states that two investments were made in trade-guilds at Govardhana, which was the old name of Nasik. This might have misled scholars to think that the Ābhīras belonged to Mathurā.

The *Mahābhārata* associates the Ābhīras with the Śūdras and places them in the land near Vināśana where the Sarasvatī lost itself in the sands of the Rajputana desert. These Ābhīras were certainly distinct from the Gopas of the Mathurā region. Kṛṣṇa's *Nārāyaṇī senās*, who were asked to fight on behalf of the Kauravas, consisted of Gopas and not of the Ābhīras. The Ābhīras, on the other hand, abducted the ladies of the Vṛṇṣi-Andhaka families when they were being escorted by Arjuna to Hastināpura.[12] The Gopas could not have perpetrated such a deed,

A recent writer has deseribed Kṛṣṇa as 'the non-Aryan dark hero of the Yādava tribe.'[13] Is there any positive proof of the Yādavas being a non-Aryan tribe? The Yādavas are descendants of Yadu, the son of Yayāti, who is referred to as Nāhuṣyya in the *Ṛgveda*. The Yadu tribe along with Turvaśas are repeatedly mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. They fought against Sudās.[14] The descendants of Yadu are nowhere described as foreigners or *Mlecchas*. Sons of Pracetā eighth in descent from Druhyu, are described in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* to have spread out into the Mleccha countries to the north beyond India[15] and ruled over these. In narrating the life of

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11 *Mbh.*, II. 29.9.
12 *Mbh.* XVI. 8.; *Vāyu*, 45. 115, 126, 47. 46, 99. 269.
13 D.D. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, N.S. Vol. XXVII, p. 43.
14 *RV.* I. 174. 9; IV. 30.17; V. 31.3; VI. 20.12.
15 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, VI. 17. 5.

Yayāti, the *Ādiparvan* states that the Yādavas sprang out of Yadu, the Yavanas were born of Turvasu, the Bhojas came from the sons of Druhyu and the Mleccha tribes were the products of Anu.[16] This is also found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[17] This verse does not attach any blame to the Yādavas. The poor lamb in *Aesop's Fable* was punished for the alleged fault of his forefathers but the modern research scholars seem to condemn the Yādavas for the alleged fault of the descendants of their brothers.

The Yādavas seem to have been endowed with originality. They did not always conform to the orthodox ways of living or thinking. The *Kūrma Purāṇa* states that on the advice of Nārada, Sātvata composed or introduced a scripture, useful to the *Kundas* and *Golas*, that is to say the illegitimate children born of married women and widows.[18] This probably means that the illegitimate children were given a status in society by Sātvata. Kṛṣṇa can not be called either an un-Aryan or a foreigner for this reason.

In the *Droṇaparvan* we find Bhūriśravas calling the Yādavas by the abusive term Vrātyas.[19]

This is a solitary reference in the whole of the *Mahābhārata*. Nowhere else, either in the epic or in the *Purāṇas*, are the Yādāvas called Vrātyas. The critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* has got a passage in the

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16 *Yadostu Yādava jātas-Turvasor Yavanaḥ Smṛtaḥ*
Druhyōhrapi sūta Bhoja Anos tu Mleccha-jātayaḥ.
Mbh. I. 80. 26. The term *mleccha* occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* in the sense of a barbarian in speech. Macdonell and Keith hold that they were Aryan speakers, of a Prākṛta dialect.

17 *Matsya Purāṇa*, 34.30

18 *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I. 24.34.

19 *Mbh.* VII. 18. 15.

Sabhāparvan, in which Kṛṣṇa says that in his tribe there are eighteen thousand Vrātas (*Vrātānām*), but the Vaṅgabāsī edition and the Kumbhakonam edition as well as the manuscripts in the Tanjore, Dacca and Viśvabhāratī libraries have got the word as *Bhrātṛṇāṁ* or *Bhrātaraḥ* for *Vrātanāṁ*. The Vrātas, according to Patañjali, are those who live by *utsedha* or loot and plunder.[20] Is it reasonable to hold that Kṛṣṇa would boast of the eighteen thousand *goondas* in his family before Yudhiṣṭhira ? The *Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Śutra* equates the words *Vrātina* and *Vrātya*.[21] The Vrātyas, according to Macdonel and Keith, were Aryans outside the sphere of Brahmin culture. The *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* writes that they did not practise agriculture or commerce, nor did they observe the rules of *Brahmacarya*.[21] From this some scholars have come to the conclusion that the Yādavas were nomads like the Gopas. But such a conclusion would militate against the whole trend of evidence of the epic and the *Purāṇas*. Baudhāyana defines Vrātya as the son of an uninitiated man.[23] Āpastamba, however, derives the terms from the root *Vrata* and describes him as a Śrotriya.[24] On the authority of the *Ṛgveda* I. 163, 8 Bloomfield has explained the term *Vrāta* as *Saṁghātmaka*, those who belong to a Saṁgha or republic. It is probable that the Yādavas were looked down upon by the people having the monarchical constitution, just as the Russians were looked down upon a generation ago because they adopted Communism.

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20 Bhakat Prasad Majumdar, *Policy of the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi Saṁgha* (Submitted to the Indian History Congress, Allahabad, 1965),

21 *Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, VIII, 5.6.

22 *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*, XVII. 1.2.

23 *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra*, 1.8.

24 *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra*, II, pp. 118-19 (SBE).

There can be no doubt of the fact that the Yādavas were a republican people. The story of Yayāti in the *Ādiparvan* also relates that on account of the curse of Yayāti there could be no king among the descendants of Yadu.[25] Pāṇini (VI. 2. 35) definitely states that there were many Rājanyas amongst the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis. Kauṭilya (I. 6) corroborates this statement. Kaṁsa appears to have set up a sort of unconstitutional dictatorship by seizing all power in his hands. This is why the elders of the Bhoja-Vṛṣṇi-Andhaka tribes appealed to Kṛṣṇa to overthrow him. Kṛṣṇa succeeded in destroying the despotic rule of Kaṁsa. He did not assume royal power himself. In the *Mahābhārata* he is described as the *Saṅgha-mukhya*,[26] though Ugrasena, continued to be the titular chief, on account of his being the eldest male member of the oldest clan.

Recently one scholar has tried to show that Kṛṣṇa's epithets—Keśava, Keśin[27] and Hṛṣīkeśa—are based on the words Ks and, therefore, he represented a Caspian ethnic group. The same writer quotes the authority of a distinguished linguist to prove that the sage Kaśyapa, as his name indicates, must have belonged to the Caspian region, merely because of the similarity of sound. He holds that Kṛṣṇa is an ante-Aryan conception, because in the *Ṛgveda* (VIII. 96-13-15) one Kṛṣṇa encamped on the banks of the river Aṁśumatī with ten thousand soldiers and Indra told his friends, the Maruts, to fight against him. Mere similarity of names prompts him to identify this demon Kṛṣṇa with Vāsudeva and Devakī-putra Kṛṣṇa.

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25 *Mbh.* I. 84.9.

26 *Mbh.* XII. 82.25.

27 Kṛṣṇa is addressed in the *Gītā* and *Mahābhārata* as Keśi-nisūdana, Killer of Keśin, and not as Keśin.

According to him, mountain-worship is a prominent feature of Sumero-Babylonian region and as Kṛṣṇa introduced the worship of Govardhana hill, he must be a non-Aryan.[28] But the *Ṛgveda* (X. 121. 4.) refers to the Himavant mountain and numerous hymns speak of *Giri-parvata*, hills and moutains.[29] The main argument of this writer is that as Kṛṣṇa fought against Indra, he must be a non-Aryan. But D. D. Kosambi knocks down the very basis of his argument when he declared Indra too as a non-Aryan. Such theories are based more on imaginati n than on facts.

Dr. A. D. Pusalker considers Kṛṣṇa as a representative of the true type of Aryan heroes and gives credit to the Yādavas for carrying the banner of Aryan culture over large tracts of land in the south-west and in Rajputana, Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan. But he believes that they had a considerable mixture of non-Aryan blood in their veins. He observes : "The fact that they mixed freely with the non-Aryans, with whom they had marital relations and some of whose customs they incorporated, facilitated the Aryanisation of the so-called outsiders, and thus spread Aryan culture far and wide."[30] He does not, however, cite any reference for his statement.

It is necessary to remind the readers that the *Harivaṁśa* (I. 36) and the *Matsya* (44. 14-47), *Vāyu* (95. 14-47), *Viṣṇu*

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28 Buddhaprakash, 'Kṛṣṇa (an Anthropological study)' in the *P. K. Gode Commemoration Volume*, Part II, pp. 36-57.

29 *Rv.* 1. 56. 4; VIII. 64, 5; *Av.* IV. 7. 8; VI. 12. 3; 17. 3; IX. 1. 18.

30 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (Vol. I)—*The Vedic Age*, p. 315. The only authority he cites is K. M. Munshi, *The Glory that was Gurjaradeśa*, I, pp. 120-24. But the edition of the book published by the Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavana does not contain any reference to Kṛṣṇa in those pages.

(IV. 12), *Bhāgavata* (IX. 23), *Brahmāṇḍa* (III, 70, 14-48), *Brahma* (15. 1-30), *Padma* (V. 13. 1-30), *Liṅga* (1. 68. 21-49), *Kūrma* (1.24, 1-32), *Agni* 274 (12-33) and *Garuḍa* (1. 139. 25-35) *Purāṇas* furnish the names of all the prominent ancestors of Kṛṣṇa. We give below the substance of the observations of the first five sources. All these sources can not be brushed aside as mere figments of imagination and the vague and uncorroborated insinuations of some modern Indologists only accepted as truth.

Genealogy of Kṛṣṇa

'S' = Same as *Matsya* ; 'X' indicates not mentioned.

Harivaṁśa.	*Vāyu P.* 95.14.	*Matsya P.*		*Viṣṇu P.*
S	S	(1)	Yadu	S
S	S	(2)	Kroṣṭu	S
S	S	(3)	Vrijinīvant	Dhvajinīvān
S	S	(4)	Svāhi	Svāti
Ruṣadgu	Ruṣadgu	(5)	Ruśadgu	Ruśaṅku
S	S	(6)	Citraratha	S
S	S	(7)	Pṛthuśravas	S
S	S	(8)	Pṛthuśravas	S
S	S	(9)	Suyajña	Pṛthutama
S	S	(10)	Uśanas	S
Śineyu	X	(11)	Titikṣu	Śitapu
S	S	(12)	Marutta	Rukmakavaca
S	S	(13)	Kambalabarhis	Parābṛt
S	S	(14)	Rukmakavaca	
S	S	(15)	Jyāmagha	S
S	S	(16)	Vidarbha	S
S	S	(17)	Kratha	S
X	X	(18)	Vidarbha	X
S	S	(19)	Kunti	S
S	S	(20)	Dhṛṣṭa	S

X	S	(21)	Nirvṛti	Nidhṛti
X	X	(22)	Vidūratha	X
S	S	(23)	Daśārha	S
X	X	(24)	Vyoman	S
S	S	(25)	Jīmūta	S
Vṛhati	Vṛhati	(26)	Vikṛti	Vikṛti
S	S	(27)	Bhīmaratha	S
	Rathavara			
S	S	(28)	Nararatha	Navaratha
Daśaratha	Ekādaśaratha			Daśaratha
S	S	(29)	Śakuni	S
S	S	(30)	Karambha	Karambhi
S	S	(31)	Devarāta	S
S	S	(32)	Devakṣatra	S
	Devana			
S	S	(33)	Madhu	S
Maruvasa	Mahāpuruvasa	(34)	Puruvasa	Kumāravaṁśa
S	S	(35)	Purudvant	Anu
	Purudvaha			
	Satva	(36)	Jantu	Aṁśu
S	Sātvata	(37)	Sātvata	S

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* gives a somewhat different account. The first three Kings are the same as in other account. The fourth King is called Svāhita instead of Svāhā or Svāhi. His son is called Viśadgu instead of Ruṣadgu or Ruśadgu. The sixth, seventh and eighth Kings are the same. But the ninth is called Dharma. The tenth is the same. The eleventh is called Rucaka. His son is the fifteenth King Jyāmagha. The sixteenth to the nineteenth Kings are the same. But the twentieth King is called Vṛṣṇi. From the twenty-first to the twenty-eighth Kings are the same. But Śakuni's father is called Daśaratha as in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Harivaṁśa*. The twenty-ninth to the thirty-third Kings are the same,

But then a different genealogy is given as follows : Madhu's son is (34) Kuruvaṁśa, his son (35) Anu, (36) his son Puruhotra, (37) his son Āyu and (38) Āyu's son is Śātvata. The total number of generations from Yadu to Sātvata is 35 instead of 37 of the *Matsya*.

In the composite synchronistic table constructed by Pargiter we find the name of the fifth King as Ruśadgu, as in the *Harivaṁśa*. He places Antara between 8 and 9. The eleventh King is called Śineyu following *Harivaṁśa*. Parāvṛt is placed between the fourteenth and fifteenth Kings. The seventeenth King is called Kratha-Bhīma. The twenty-sixth King is called Vikṛti as in the *Vāyu*. The twenty-eighth King is Rathavara and his son is Daśaratha and his son Ekādaśaratha. The twenty-ninth to the thirty-second Kings are the same. But Devana follows Devakṣetra and precedes the thirty-third King Madhu. The last four Kings are the same as in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.

The genealogical tables show that there is not much difference between the different genealogical tables preserved in the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*. The accounts of the places of pilgrimage in the different *Purāṇas* indicate that they were compiled in different regions of India. As the mode of pronounciation and also the scripts varied from province to province some variations in the names are bound to occur. But this much is certain that between Manu and Yayāti there were six generations and from Yadu to Sātvata some thirty-seven generations of the Yādavas. From Sātvata to Kṛṣṇa there were some twelve generations. In all the number of Yādava generations from Manu to Kṛṣṇa is 55. On the face of such an elaborate record of the genealogy of the ancestors of Kṛṣṇa it is absurd to build up hypotheses of non-Aryan origin of Kṛṣṇa on the basis of vague suspicions and unbridled imagination.

Neither the *Harivaṁśa* nor any of the *Purāṇas* does describe that any of the ancestors of Kṛṣṇa ever married a non-Aryan woman. A spurious passage in the *Mahābhārata* states that Śūra the grand-father of Kṛṣṇa married the daughter of the serpent king, Āryaka. But this passage has been discarded as apocryphal in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*.[31] Thus there is not an iota of evidence to show that Kṛṣṇa had non-Aryan blood in his veins.

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31 29, I. p. 916.

CONCLUSION

To some scholars like Hopkins both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa appear to have been "tribal heroes, mythical perhaps, but not products of divine mythology".[1]

Kṛṣṇa is a real historical personage. To call him a mythical or an allegorical figure is to ignore the evidence of the whole of the ancient Indian historical tradition. The genealogy of the famous royal dynasties was carefully preserved by distinct classes of persons called the Sūtas, Vyāsas and the Paurāṇikas. As many as twelve out of the eighteen *Purāṇas* recount the names of ancestors of Kṛṣṇa. These *Purāṇas* were compiled in different regions of India and yet there is a remarkable agreement among them so far as the Yādava genealogy is concerned. Several variations in the names indicate that one list was not a slavish copy of the other.

The Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi sects of the Yādava clan had a republican constitution. But the epics, *Purāṇas* and *Ha ivaṁśa*, which received their final form after the destruction of most of the republics, speak of the coronation of Ugrasena after the killing of Kaiṁsa. Some of the *Purāṇas* also relate that Vajra, the great-grandson of Kṛṣṇa was crowned as king by Arjuna in the Mathurā region after the extirpation of the Yādavas. But one solitary coin of the Vṛṣṇis has been discovered and it has been published by Cunningham.[2] The legend on the coin means either 'the protector of the tribe Vṛṣṇirājanya' or "of the protector of Rājanya (or warrior) tribe, Vṛṣṇis".[3]

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1 *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 257.
2 Cunningham, *Coins of India*, p. 70.
3 Allan, *Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India*, pp. CLVI-CLVII.

It has been assigned to the first century B. C. and its find spot may be supposed to be the Punjab. A branch of the Vṛṣṇi sept probably migrated from Mathurā to the Punjab. The coin proves that the Vṛṣṇis were Kṣatriya, and not identical with the Ābhīras in any way.

The date of Kṛṣṇa may be assigned to the neighbourhood of the year 1000 B. C. If the Purāṇic genealogy of 55 generations intervening between Manu and Kṛṣṇa be correct and if the general average of the length of each reign be accepted as 18 years, date of Manu would be about one thousand years before the time of Kṛṣṇa. This will make the beginning of the Aryan settlement in India about 2000 B.C. Such a date may not be totally inconsistent with the findings of the recent excavations at Lothal, Hastināpura and the neighbouring areas. Calculations of dates on such data, however, are based mainly on conjectures.

The first positive reference to Devakīputra Kṛṣṇa, who is identical with Vāsudeva, occurs in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, which must have been composed sometime before the sixth century B.C. A great man of one age becomes either a dim shadowy figure or a hero of hundred deeds in course of some three or four hundred years even in these days of scientific inventions. There is no reason to believe that some legends did not grow around the fascinating personality of Kṛṣṇa in course of time. For example, Kṛṣṇa's expedition against Naraka at Prāgjyotiṣapura in Assam was probably invented at least five hundred years after his death. The Vedic literature and even Pāṇini do not indicate that Assam was known to the Aryan people of India. If this inference is correct Kṛṣṇa's marriage with the sixteen thousand ladies rescued after the death of Naraka must be treated as a legend. A student of history should be critical but he need not carry his scepticism

too far. For example, to suggest that the association of Kṛṣṇa with the Bhārata War is not reliable is to disregard the entire volume of traditions of an ancient people. Again to argue from the *B.G.* VII. 19 that rare were the *mahātmās* who recognised that "Vāsudeva is all" is to take out the words from their context with a view to putting an imaginary construction. The first part of the couplet says that wise seekers of knowledge realise God after many births. This verse is not certainly a lamentation of Kṛṣṇa over the paucity of his followers. Nor does the next verse imply that people scorned him as has been supposed by some researchers in history. The *Gītā* embodies the philosophy, hinted at in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* and must have been based on the actual teachings of Kṛṣṇa, though it was at a time when Kṛṣṇa was recognised as the All-God as well as the supreme religious teacher. Kṛṣṇa denounced the mechanical performance of rites and emphasised the importance of devotion, true knowledge and disinterested action. The synthesis of the three paths built up by Kṛṣṇa is found in the *B. G.* The task of a historian is to compare and sift the various accounts so that the kernel of history may be distinguished from the mass of legends. Ācārya Śaṅkara has put the scholars on the wrong track by imagining that Devakīputra Kṛṣṇa was the disciple of Ghora Āṅgirasa. As a matter of fact the passage in question reveals that Ghora Āṅgirasa addressed Kṛṣṇa as Acyuta, infallible, *Akṣita*, indestructible and *Prāṇa-saṅśita*, the very essence of life. A highly critical scholar like Dr. D. C. Sircar too admits that Devakīputra was called by the name Kṛṣṇa-Acyuta in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as well as the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.[4] This

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4 *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 433.

shows that the godhood of Kṛṣṇa was admitted even before the sixth century B.C. In any case there can be no doubt about the fact that Kṛṣṇa was recognised as an Enlightened One in that age.

It is wrong to suppose that Kṛṣṇa was originally a tribal god, worshipped by the Yādavas only. As a matter of fact the Syamantaka jewel episode as related in the *Purāṇas*, the lamentation of Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* over the conduct of the Vṛṣṇi-Andhakas towards him and above all the positive statement in the *Bhāgavata* that the Yādavas were so unfortunate that they could not recognise the divinity of Kṛṣṇa,[5] prove that the prophet was not honoured by his own people. If some of the early evidences of the worship of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva have been found in the Mathurā region that must be due to the influence of Vajra who is credited with the introduction of the worship of images of Kṛṣṇa and also the loving reverence of the people of Vraja for him.

Taxila is far off from Dvārakā as well as from Mathurā and yet in the fifth century B. C. Pāṇini, a citizen of Taxila, speaks of 'Vāsudevaka' in the sense of "a person whose object of Bhakti is Vāsudeva". The evidence of Kauṭilya shows that Saṅkarṣaṇa was worshipped in Magadha. The prevalence of the cult of Herakles, who is none else than Kṛṣṇa, in the Mathurā region has been testified to by Megasthenes in the fourth century B. C.

Some historians point out that there is no reference to Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva or Vaiṣṇavism in Aśoka's inscriptions and they conclude that this religion had not attained much importance in the third century B. C. But Aśoka did not undertake to make a survey of all the religions of his time. Is it proper to draw any conclusion by a method which ignores the positive evidences of Pāṇini, Kauṭilya and

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5 *Bhāgavata*, III. 2. 8.

Megasthenes and depends on the negative evidence of Aśoka's inscriptions only ? The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is earlier than Aśoka and it expounds the teachings of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva is certainly the All-God or the Supreme God in the *Gītā.*

The second century B. C. may be called the hey-day of the cult of Kṛṣṇa. From the testimony of Patañjali we learn that the story of the killing of Kaṁsa was enacted by groups of actors like the story of Balī and Vāmana. As the two incidents have been referred together, it is surmised by scholars that there was complete identification between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa in the age of Patañjali. Vāsudeva has been called *devadeva* or the greatest god in the Besnagar inscription. The fact that a Yavana or Greek erected a column dedicated to Garuḍa shows the popularity of Vaiṣṇavism in the last quarter of the second century B. C. Besnagar is in the old Gwalior state, which is almost contiguous to the Mathurā region. The discovery of another inscription at Besnagar recording an excellent temple of Bhagavat proves the popularity of the religion of Kṛṣṇa in that area.

The *Sabhāparvan* describes the selection of Kṛṣṇa as the person worthy of receiving worshipful homage at the *Rājasūya* ceremony. The description of the Śakas, Tukhāras, Kārikas, Cīnas, Hūṇas and others who were made to pay tributes to Yudhiṣṭhira indicates that this portion of the *Sabhāparvan* was composed, in all probability, in the second century B. C.[6] It

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6 This theory has been put forward by Motichandra in his "*Geographical and Econnomic Studies in the Mahābhārata.*" The name of Romā (Rome) occurs in the *Mbh.* II. 28. 49 and the editor of the critical edition writes that the name of Rome did not come to the ears of Indians before the first century B. C. and "very likely not until a century or two later" (Introduction, p. XXVIII). He appears to have been over-cautious, because an Indian embassy was sent to Augustus in the first century B. C. It would not have been possible for the Indians to send such

was at the *Rājasūya* assembly that Bhīṣma declared Kṛṣṇa to be the greatest man and also the supreme creator of the universe. Some of his observations are worth quoting: "I do not see any king in this assembly of monarchs who has not been defeated by the prowess of this descendant of Sātvata race. He is vastly learned in the Vedāṅgas, and he is also very great in prowess. Liberality, cleverness, knowledge of *Śruti*, bravery, modesty, achievements, excellent intelligence, humility, beauty, fairness, contentment and prosperity, all reside forever in Acyuta. Kṛṣṇa is the origin of the universe, and he is that in which the universe is to dissolve. This universe of mobile and immobile creatures has sprung into existence from Kṛṣṇa alone. He is unmanifest primal Nature, he is the creator, he is external and he is beyond all creatures. The intellect, the seat of sensibility, the principal elements, air, heat, water, space, earth and the four kinds of life, are all established in Kṛṣṇa." In the face of such an unequivocal statement of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa it is nothing but casuistry to say that the *Mahābhārata* does not reveal the complete deification of Kṛṣṇa,

An echo of the declaration of Bhīṣma is discernable in the Ghosundi inscription of the first century B. C. Here Sankarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva are described as *anihata* or unconquered on the one hand and *Sarveśvara*, supreme lord on the other.[7] *Ahiṁsā* or non-violence had not yet become a cardinal feature of Vaiṣṇavism, because the inscription states that the donor of the Nārāyaṇa-Vāṭikā performed an Aśvamedha sacrifice, though he was a Bhāgavata. While

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an embassy if Rome was altogether unknown to them before the time of Augustus. They might have learnt about Rome from the Selucids of Syria.

7 D. C. Sircar in *The Age of Imperiat Unity*, p. 438.

this inscription shows that Kṛṣṇa was worshipped as All-God in Chitorgarh, Rajputana, the Nanaghat inscription testifies to the adoration of Sankarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva along with the Vedic deities like Indra, the Moon, the Sun, Yama, Varuṇa and Kuvera in western India. Kṛṣṇa can not be said to have been a local deity in the pre-Christian era.

It is in this background that the narration of the life of Kṛṣṇa in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is to be reviewed. This is probably the earliest of the *Purāṇas* to relate fully the life of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula. Some scholars hold that the testimony of the *Purāṇas* is inferior to that of the *Mahābhārata*, and that the latter does not refer to the life of Kṛṣṇa as a cowherd. But the Purāṇic tradition is older than the tradition of the *Mahābhārata*, because it is referred to in the *Atharvaveda*,[8] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[9] and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.[10] Even Rapson admits that the *Purāṇas* have preserved an independent tradition, which supplements the priestly tradition of the *Vedas* and *Brāhmaṇas* and which goes back to the same period.[11] Kane has shown that Kauṭilya did not know the extant *Mahābhārata* but he was familiar with the *Purāṇa*, because he wrote that the Sūta and Māgadha of the *Purāṇas* are quite different from the members of the mixed castes called Sūta and Māgadha.[12] Winternitz considers the date of compilation of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* in the present form to be "not much later than the fifth century A.D." and holds that "on the whole, at least it has been preserved in its original from." The name of

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8 *Atharvaveda*, XI. 7. 24.

9 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XI. 5, 6, 8.

10 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VIII. I.

11 *Cambridge History of India*, I. 302.

12 *Arthaśāstra*, III.7, quoted by Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. I, p. 102.

Viṣṇugopa, the Pallava ruler of Kāñcī in the fourth century A.D. proves the antiquity of the tradition associating Kṛṣṇa with the Gopas. Kālidāsa also speaks of Viṣṇu dressed as a Gopa. It is interesting to note in this connection that he rejects the genealogy of Rāma as described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and accepts the Purāṇic version as his authority for his *Raghuvaṁśa*.[13] The Purāṇic version of the life of Kṛṣṇa, therefore, can not be summarily dismissed as legendary or unhistorical. But there are some points of difference among the *Purāṇas* themselves. One has to sift carefully their evidence.

A number of sculptures belonging to the fifth century A.D. depict the various incidents in the early life of Kṛṣṇa. Thus the Gupta temple at Deogarh has got representations of Nanda and Yaśodā fondling Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa upturning the cart and killing the bull-demon. The scene of holding of Govardhana is depicted in the panels of Mandor and also of Nagari and both of these belong to the fifth century. The association of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopīs and especially with Rādhā has been sculptured at Mamallapuram in the southern and Paharpur in the eastern part of India in the seventh century A.D. The name of Rādhā is not mentioned in the *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata* indeed, but as J. Gonda points out, "her name is doubtless related to the Vedic *rādhas*, success, prosperity, wealth, bounty, favour, liberality, *radha* itself being not entirely unusual instead

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13 Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 121. According to the *Rāmāyaṇa* there are 14 or 15 kings from Raghu to Rāma; Kālidāsa follows the *Purāṇas* and mentions four kings, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha and Rāma. Thus he virtually declares that the *Purāṇas* are right and the *Rāmāyaṇa* wrong.

of *Samṛddhi*".[14] The occurrence of the name of Rādhā in the *Gāthāsaptaśatī* and the *Gauḍavaho-Kāvya* indicates that she was a familiar figure in the Prakrit Kāvyas. Inscriptions of the eighth and the tenth centuries reveal that Rādhā entered the portals of history from the field of folk religion and culture. The worship of Rādhā along with Kṛṣṇa must have been confined to the poor devotees, reluctant to devote their time and energy to the accumulation of riches. The richer classes preferred to worship Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa with his consort Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth. This is why the images of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa belonging to the pre-Caitanya period are comparatively rare.

In the middle ages interest centred round Kṛṣṇa's life at Vṛndāvana rather than in his heroic and diplomatic feats at Dvārakā, Hastināpura and elsewhere. New legends grew up round his personality. As the whole universe is regulated by His will nothing is considered improbable in His case. The *līlā* which strikes the imagination of a poet or devotee is regarded as the product of divine inspiration. In this way the number of Kṛṣṇa legends multiplied throughout the middle ages. Kṛṣṇa is worshipped as the Eternal Being by millions of Indians. They refuse to regard him as a mere historical personage, who lived once upon a time in this world. The beautiful hymn of Mīrābāi (G. 1547-1614) illustrates best their attitude :

'How beautiful is Thy form, Darling, donning the peacock crown and wearing the bright lightning-like *Pītāmbara*, the garland of flowers dangling on Thine breast. O ! Thou the cow-herd boy ! O ! Thou the flute-player !

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14 J. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Visnuism*, p. 163, f. n.

Daily shall I plant new creepers of variegated flowers for Thee ; And dressed in a yellow *sārī*—I shall have Thy *darśana*.

At dead of night, by the side of Yamunā, Thou appearest before me in Form Effulgent.'[15]

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15 Bankey Behari, *Ministrels of God*, Part 6 (Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavana), p. 92.

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